

USC School of Dramatic Arts

Theatre 125: Text Studies for Production

Section #62644 -- 4 units
FALL 2024 -- Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00-1:50 p.m.
KAP 164

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Catalogue Description

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

Section Overview

In this course section, we will examine play texts that represent a range of historical and contemporary styles in drama and theatrical production. Each play reflects its own era's performance conventions and encompasses themes of continuing relevance such as: home, family, love, war, political power and culture, racial and gender issues. Three basic goals will frame our studies: (1) to analyze plays as scores for performance and production; (2) to advance your skills in dramatic analysis by introducing concrete analytical tools; and (3) to inspire your artistic creativity through your encounter with the diversity in historical and contemporary works.

Learning Objectives

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

Learner Outcomes

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

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

- The platforms for this course are Brightspace, Zoom, the USC email system, and the USC room as assigned.
- A device that has a webcam, microphone, and internet access, as well as standard office software (including a power point for presentations and document/pdf software for written work) is necessary for this course.
- Presentations in class will be shared through zoom.
- Written work must be submitted as **Word docs or as PDFs**, no Google docs please.

Class Session Notes

This course will be conducted in person and will follow the policies and protocols for health and safety as established by USC and by LA City and County Officials. Zoom will be used for in-class presentations and for emergency purposes only.

PARTICIPATION: You are expected to participate fully in all classes. If at any time you are unable to attend class, email me and the CA immediately. Participation and good communication about absences is mandatory to achieve full credit for the course.

WHEN ON-GROUND:

1. Arrive promptly and in compliance with health and safety protocols
2. Bring reading and course materials with you to class.
3. Be ready to participate.
4. As per USC policy, only absences for religious holidays are excused. All other absences count. Should you need to miss class due to illness or emergencies, I, your peers, and the CA will be available to help you catch up on any missed work. (See **Attendance** below.)
5. Feel free to communicate with me about any difficulties you may be experiencing in class.

ZOOM ETIQUETTE IF ON-LINE:

6. Keep your camera on (so we all can see you), mute your microphone (to avoid feedback) unless you are speaking, and log on as individuals. If you have bandwidth or connectivity problems that make it best to keep your camera off, please speak with me or our CA about it.
7. If for any reason the internet goes down during a class session due to emergency conditions, please communicate with me or our CA as soon as possible.

Overall Course Norms and Expectations

PREPARATION: Come to class with your text and having read and thought about the assignment for that day.

ENSEMBLE: We will function as an ensemble. You are therefore expected to respect all members of the class; to work collaboratively with each other; and to show responsibility toward each other.

ATTENDANCE:

1. Attendance and punctuality are mandatory to build our ensemble. *You will forfeit your right to participate in class if you arrive late or come unprepared.*
2. If you are unable to attend a class or will be late for any reason, email me and the CA in advance. If you are ill, please do not come to class. I and your peers will help you catch up.
3. Absences for auditions or professional work will be counted as regular absences. (See also **Extracurricular Commitments and ISPs** below.)
4. A pattern of lateness and/or absence and/or a lack in any of the expectations outlined here can significantly impact your final grade. (See **Grading Breakdown** below.)

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. You are expected to do your own work for all assignments. AI Generators are prohibited in this course. If you use research sources, those must be cited properly to avoid plagiarism. (See the statements on **Academic Integrity** and **AI** below.)
2. While the content of each class session may be adjusted to accommodate the pace of class, due dates for graded assignments will not change.
3. No late work will be accepted and students are expected to manage their time in accord with the due dates.
4. If you have an unforeseen emergency, email me or the CA immediately.

TECHNOLOGY: Courtesy dictates that you put your cell phone away and do not surf the web on your laptop during class sessions.

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).

Required Texts for Section #64642

The following texts have been ordered for you at the Bookstore. Please get these texts early, since the bookstore can sell out.

1. *Course Reader: You will need the Reader for the second class.*
2. Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, trans. Peter Meineck (Hackett) **Be sure to get this translation.**
3. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, any edition (the Oxford Shakespeare edition has been ordered).
4. Shakespeare/Nunn, *Twelfth Night: A Screenplay* by Trevor Nunn (Bloomsbury).
5. Alice Childress, *Wedding Band* (Samuel French).
6. Leslie Ayvazian, *Nine Armenians* (Samuel French).
7. Quiara Alegria Hudes, *Water by the Spoonful* (TCG).

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Breakdown

A: Research -- 20% of Final Grade

ONE In-Class Presentation (5-8 minutes maximum). Topics and due dates will be distributed during the first week of the term. Presentations are intended to provide background information on the course material and to spark class discussions. Therefore:

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

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

For each of these assignments, submit 4 cogent questions for which you do not have firm answers about the text(s) under discussion. For each question, also suggest an analytical tool introduced in our class that you think might help find an answer. These questions should productively provoke you and your peers to deepen your discussion of the work(s). Specific directions and prompts for these assignments will be discussed in class and posted on Brightspace.

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

For each of these papers, write a thoughtful essay (4-5 double-spaced pages) on the assigned play. Your paper should be organized in two parts:

Part A -- 2-3 pages of analysis based upon one of your productive questions about the last play read in the term, using a specific analytical tool introduced in class;

Part B – 1-2 pages that address one production possibility inherent in the play. You may write this part of the paper from the perspective of (1) an actor preparing a role; (2) a director planning the production; (3) a theatre designer; (4) a dramaturg writing program notes; or (5) a producer seeking funds to stage it.

Specific prompts for these papers will be made available in class and on Brightspace.

D: Final Examination -- 20% of Final Grade

- A two-hour, in-person, written examination held on the day/time required by USC. **Be sure to make your holiday travel plans with this date (see below) in mind!**
- The exam will include short-answer objective questions about the course material and a short essay on the last play read in the class.

Assignment Submission Policy

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

Course evaluation

Course evaluation occurs online at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with me as the instructor to offer feedback.

Grading Breakdown and Scale

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

Excellent:	A	95-100
Excellent:	A-	90-94
Good:	B+	87-89
Good:	B	83-86
Good:	B-	80-82
Average:	C+	77-79
Average:	C	73-76
Average:	C-	70-72
Poor:	D+	67-69
Poor:	D	63-66
Poor:	D-	60-62
Failing:	F	59 and below

“Excellent” means that clear understanding of the class material is coupled with original, creative insight; “good” means that the material has been understood clearly; “average” means that the material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding remain; “poor” means that there are identifiable gaps in the understanding of material; “failure” means that there is poor understanding of the class content by term’s end; and/or gaps in the successful completion of work; and/or a lack of responsibility with regard to course expectations (above).

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

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

Grading Timeline

Every effort will be made to grade work and provide feedback in a timely fashion available through Brightspace.

Additional Course Policies

1. If you need any learning accommodations, be sure to contact the USC Office of Disabilities (see **Support Systems** below) and present a letter with your approved accommodations to Dr. Carnicke in the first weeks of the semester and before any assignments are due.

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

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.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

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 or CA if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

AI Generators

This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses that are not acceptable in scholarship or in professional work. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Course Schedule: Your Due Dates (These dates will not change.)

Please note the following important dates in your calendar.

- The personalized date and topic of your presentation.
- Sept. 19—First Assignment on Posing Productive Questions
- Oct. 15—Second Assignment on Posing Productive Questions
- Oct. 17—First Paper
- Nov. 14—Third Assignment on Posing Production Questions
- Nov. 19—Second Paper
- Dec. 17—In-person Final Examination

Course Schedule: Your Weekly Breakdown (All dates are subject to USC/SDA changes.)

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

Module 1: The Course and Its Goals

- Tu Aug. 27 Introductions to the course and each other
Distribution of class presentation topics and dates.
READ: The Syllabus
- Th Aug. 29 Encountering the play—the figure/ground relationship between audience and play
In class—read for fun and learning: Evgeny Shvartz, *The Dragon* (on Brightspace);
- Tu Sept. 3 What is a Play?
READ: Excerpts by Constantin Stanislavski; Anne Bogart, Martin Esslin, and Bernard Beckerman in the *Course Reader*

Module 2: The Amphitheatre

- Th Sept. 5 The Play as a score for performance.
In-Class work with the first choral ode in *Agamemnon* (the first play in the *Oresteia*).
Presentations on ancient Greek theatre.
READ: Excerpts by Raymond Williams on *Antigone*.
- Tu Sept. 10 The story, plot and overarching perspective in *The Furies*.
Presentations: on Aeschylus and the *Oresteia*.
READ: *The Furies* which is the first play of the trilogy, *Oresteia*, by Aeschylus
- Th Sept. 12 Action, Counteraction and Event in an etude on *The Furies*
Presentation on Aristotle.
READ: Aristotle's *The Poetics* (sections I-IX) in the *Course Reader*
- Friday, Sept. 13: Last day to add, to select audit, or to change P/NP to a letter grade.
- Tu Sept. 17 Putting it all together—Figure/Ground, plot/story, Action/Counteraction in *The Furies*.
Discussion on production as reconstruction or revivification
VIEW Excerpt in class from: *Agamemnon*, directed by Sir Peter Hall (Available at USC Library:
<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.libproxy2.usc.edu/watch/agamemnon?context=channel:theatre-in-video>)
- Th Sept. 19 **DUE: Assignment 1—Posing Productive Questions on *Agamemnon***
Seminar discussion grounded in your questions.

Module 3: Four Boards and a Passion

- Tu Sept. 24 **Presentations** on Shakespeare and the Globe
READ: All excerpts in the *Course Reader* concerning Shakespeare's biography and production and acting at the Globe Theatre.
VIEW by Thursday: *Twelfth Night* as staged by the Texas Shakespeare Festival (2015)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZPzNB4D7Ak&t=4722s>
- Th Sept. 26 **Background Presentations** on *Twelfth Night* and the Royal Shakespeare Company
Discussion of *Twelfth Night* based upon the assigned viewing.
Bring your play to class because we will read scenes as needed.

- Tu Oct. 1 **READ:** Shakespeare play, *Twelfth Night*.
Establishing the themes of a play through first and last scenes.
- Th Oct. 3 Shakespeare's handling of Rising and Falling Action
And etudes on selected scenes from *Twelfth Night*.
VIEW by Tuesday: Trevor Nunn's screen adaptation of *Twelfth Night* on Tubi at
https://tubitv.com/movies/100013428/twelfth-night?https://tubitv.com/home?utm_source=dsa_null_broad_legacy_null_films&utm_medium=adwords_cpc&utm_campaign=null-null-us_nb_variable_search_desktop_google_null_biddable_en_titles&gad_source=2&gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtqujW9xql2Hcenq-hzfwy9wwfd6wrObke7GgdZ-qpp76yio_FUNFXRoCNM0QAvD_BwE&startPos=6
- Tu Oct. 8 How does a screenplay differ from a play?
READ Trevor Nunn's screenplay of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*
Discussion of the screenplay as realized in the film and the differences between film and play.
Recommended viewing on your own: *She's the Man*, 2006 film directed by Andy Flickman
- Th Oct. 10 FALL BREAK—no class. HOORAY!
- Friday, Oct. 11—Last day to drop without “W”
- Tu Oct. 15 **DUE: Assignment 2—Posing Productive Questions on *Twelfth Night***
Seminar discussion grounded in your questions.
- Th Oct. 17 **DUE: Paper 1 on either *The Furies* or *Twelfth Night***
Seminar Discussion: What did you discover further about either *The Furies* or *Twelfth Night* by writing your paper?
- Module 4: Modern Theatrical Realism in the U.S.**
- Tu Oct. 22 **Presentations** on theatrical Realism, Susan Glaspell, and Alice Childress
- Th Oct. 24 Encountering Realism
READ in class for fun and learning: Glaspell, *Trifles* (on Brightspace)
- Tu Oct. 29 **Background Presentations** on *Wedding Band*.
READ: *Wedding Band* by Alice Childress
- Th Oct. 31 Continue with *Wedding Band*
Recommended viewing on your own: *Loving*—2016 film directed by Jeff Nichols
- Tu Nov. 5 **Presentations** on the Armenian genocide, diaspora, and community in LA
Discussion of *Nine Armenians*
READ: *Nine Armenians* by Leslie Ayvazian
- Nov. 7/12 Continued study and etudes on *Nine Armenians*
- Th Nov. 14 **DUE: Assignment 3—Posing Productive Questions: Two questions on *Wedding Band* and two questions on *Nine Armenians***
Seminar discussion grounded in your questions.
- Friday, Nov. 15—Last Day to drop with a mark of “W”

Tu Nov. 19 **DUE: Paper 2 on either *Wedding Band* or *Nine Armenians***
Seminar Discussion: What did you discover further about either *Wedding Band* or *Nine Armenians* by writing your paper.

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

Th Nov. 21 **Presentations** and Figure/Ground Relationship on *Water by the Spoonful*
READ: *Water by the Spoonful* by Quiara Alegria Hudes

Tu Nov. 26 Story, plot and overarching Perspective in *Water by the Spoonful*

Th Nov. 28 Thanksgiving Day—no class

Tu Dec. 3 Action, counteraction, and event in a selected scene from *Water by the Spoonful*

Th Dec. 5 Course Conclusions and Review for the Final Examination

Th Dec 17 11 am to 1 pm
IN-PERSON FINAL EXAMINATION (see above for description).

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 SDA events, 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

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. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

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 consists 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) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title 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

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