

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

## **THTR 395m: Drama as Human Relations**

**Units: 4.0**

**Fall 2024 Tues, Thurs @2pm-3:50pm**

**Location: KAP 166**

**Instructor: A.R. Winget, Ph.D., MFA (they/them)**

**Office: MCC 214 and Zoom**

**Office Hours:** Tues/Thurs :1200pm-1:00pm or by appointment

**Contact Info:** [arwinget@usc.edu](mailto:arwinget@usc.edu)

Please allow 24 hours for a response and do not expect responses on evenings or weekends.

**Course Assistant:** Nico Fife [nfife@usc.edu](mailto:nfife@usc.edu) (he/she/they)

**Office Hours:** in-person and on Zoom by appointment

Please allow 24 hours for a response and do not expect responses on evenings or weekends.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that USC resides on the unceded homelands of the Tongva people. We honor the stewardship of the Tongva past, present, and future, with gratitude for the land itself, which holds the stories and songs of indigenous peoples. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold USC more accountable to the needs of indigenous peoples.

### **Course Description**

Drama as Human Relations explores how, why, by whom, and in what contexts drama (including cultural and activist performance, film, TV, social media) can be wielded as a powerful multidimensional tool toward education, compassion, healing, and ultimately collective liberation.

Students will have an opportunity to explore and familiarize themselves with a diverse range of artists and theorists who have cultivated their own methods using drama as such a tool. These artists, for instance, use drama to play out psychosocial dilemmas that acutely signal systematic oppression in order to call out harmful practices, build communities in difference, and bridge understanding among various communities.

We will study works that address intersectional aspects of perceived human differences, including those based on race, ethnicity, class, level of education, religion, gender, sexuality, ability, political affiliation, and national origin. The course encourages its participants to appreciate the challenge and pleasure of experiencing diversity in interpersonal encounters across various boundaries.

### **Course Topic: Safety & Security at USC**

Last semester in this course, students engaged in a democratic process to select a topic that felt of urgent importance to explore on campus—safety and security at USC. Our process included researching, devising, interviewing, story circles, all of which culminated in a first draft of a new play collectively written by all students under the instructor's guidance, based on this topic. In light of last semester's protests and campus police presence, students requested that our security project continue, incorporating stories, experiences, and research from these transformative events on campus. This semester, we will therefore develop this project through additional research, interviews, and devising.

I ask that you keep an open mind and be curious/ critical of knee-jerk dismissive reactions to particular works of art/ performance. Get in touch with and understand the WHY of that art with thoughtful analysis.

## Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

Indigenous pedagogy scholar, Marie Battiste, defines education as “the belief in possibilities...It can sustain colonization in neo-colonial ways or it can decolonize...Teaching is the psychology of hope, and hope is a cause and a consequence of action...” Hope is not a mere wish but a politicized act toward a better, more inclusive world. Possibility is about finding, making, demanding openings where there have been closures. It is a utopia in the face of its counterpart, “impossibility.”

A foundation of mutual respect, listening, and as bell hooks writes extensively about, compassion, yields a conducive learning environment. My methods integrate decolonizing, healing, performance, and queer and trans studies within both scholarship and artistic practice. I work with these intersections through assignments requiring meaningful self-reflection, norm-critical and anti-racist frameworks, practicing self-care tools and offering those tools to others, understanding systematic oppression at work in our society in order to recognize privilege, and respecting differences across geopolitical contexts.

### Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Cultivate abilities for dramatic analysis and critical thinking via class discussion, writing essays, and close readings of performances and texts.
2. Articulate a coherent understanding of the role/s that race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, tribal and/or national identity have played in establishing institutions that perpetuate inequality among different groups of people (GE-G)
3. *Analysis*: Increase the student’s ability to analyze creative endeavors, including describing them with appropriate vocabulary, examining their formal elements, and engaging in research to understand their contexts.
4. *Making*: Expand the student’s knowledge about the creative process, as exemplified by specific works studied and, in many cases, by the student’s making creative work.
5. *Connectivity*: Deepen the student’s appreciation of the connections between creative endeavors and the concurrent political, religious, and social conditions; show how these endeavors fulfill cultural functions or fill cultural needs.
6. *Context*: Enrich the student’s discernment of creative production by increasing knowledge of its theoretical, historical, and aesthetic bases across history and cultures.
7. Develop and implement tools of community care and self-care as integral to theatre praxis.
8. Articulate how systems of power and normativity impact theatre and how theatre can be a tool to either reinforce or counter such structures.

## Course Notes

All course materials will be available on Brightspace. If you have trouble accessing them, email the instructor immediately. PDF files of PowerPoints will also be posted on Brightspace for your reference.

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All required readings and materials will be available in Brightspace, the library, or sent via email. For some films and TV series, students will be responsible for accessing a Netflix and Prime account. Films and shows available on MAX are accessible through student USC accounts. Students will be responsible for viewing productions off campus.

CONTENT WARNING: I will issue a content warning for texts that may have particularly sensitive material (suicide, violence, hate speech, etc.). Please communicate with me if you are uncomfortable and/or feel you need to be excluded from a particular discussion. Please also issue content warnings for your own writing/ in-class sharing/ discussions.

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

**Attendance:** I expect that you will come to class having completed the assigned reading and having prepared to participate fully in all class activities. You are responsible for all material covered in

class. This includes handouts, in-class writing assignments, the content of class discussions, and any changes to the reading schedule. You are allowed 1 unexcused absence. For each additional absence after that, your final grade goes down  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a letter (e.g. A- to B+, B to B-). Furthermore, your final grade will also lower  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a letter for every 3 unexcused tardies. Excused absences/tardies require advanced notice and are subject to the instructor's discretion. If you are ill, download a self-reporting form from the health center and turn it into me as soon as possible.

**Participation:** Please strive to be on time and present physically and mentally. It is important to engage thoughtfully in class discussions and to contribute to a safer space where people both have space to speak and feel comfortable doing so.

**Reading and Responding:** You must complete weekly assignments by the assigned due date for each class. To do so is to be responsible not only to yourself but also to your classmates. Look for opportunities to demonstrate your preparation with informed questions and comments. **The date the assignment is listed on the syllabus is the date it is DUE.**

**Research and Annotated Bibliography** Students must conduct research on the collectively decided topic and compile an annotated bibliography of 5-7 sources (some of these may include photos, video clips, websites, social media pages, etc.). Chicago Style format.

**Midterm Presentations** Your midterm presentation will be done in groups and will consist of a) independent interviews on an aspect of safety and security at USC; b) conducting independent research; and c) collective creative devised work. These will culminate in a 10-15 minute presentation of monologues, scenes, and research, some of which will be incorporated in the final project. Details to follow.

**Final Project + Performance** Your final project will build off the midterm monologue project and collaborate with the whole class on a staged reading of an original play about our collectively decided topic. This includes performance and production elements. Details to follow.

**Healing Practices:** Part of your grade is to commit to your own healing, creative exploration, and self-care. I will introduce various exercises (breathwork, freewriting, mindfulness, visualizations, affirmations, etc.) the first half of the semester, but then I will require you to bring your own practices into the classroom and share them with others. During finals week, you will submit a reflection about your healing practices. Details to follow.

## Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Participation		15%
Annotated Bibliography		10%
End of Term Reflection Paper		15%
Final Class Project & Performance		30%
Midterm (Including 2 interviews)		20%
Healing Practices + Journal		10%
TOTAL		100%

## Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

### Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments are due the date they appear on the course schedule below unless other arrangements have been made.

### Course Specific Policies

Late work is not accepted. Opportunities for extra credit will also be given.

NOTE: If, at any time in the semester, you experience difficulty in meeting the requirements of the course, it is your responsibility to notify me before the problems become insurmountable. If you do this, we will most likely be able to find ways to help you be successful in this course.

### Classroom & Online etiquette

Much of the learning for this course will happen in discussion. Participate with your full attention and enthusiasm and an attitude of intellectual curiosity. **As a class, we will create Community Agreements** at the beginning of the semester.

**Safer Space Policy:** While safety can never be guaranteed, we strive to make our classroom as safe a space as possible, which means that, **in conjunction with the community agreements**, we will strive to abide by the following policies in our discussions and other interactions with one another—

1. Acknowledging any privileges we may have, relative to other students and/or within society at large, and how these may affect our discussions and perspectives; these include, but are not limited to race/gender/class/sexuality/ability/citizenship status.
2. Striving not only to refrain from classist/sexist/racist/transphobic/homophobic/ableist remarks and practices, but to actively engage in anti-racist, anti-oppressive practices through our discussions and our examinations of the texts.
3. Treating each other with respect, including listening attentively; respecting pronouns and names; not interrupting and not making assumptions.

The classroom is a communal environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professor's experience, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion. Disrespectful conduct which disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

### 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](#).

### **Regarding AI Generators -- NOT PERMITTED**

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, 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. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

### **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. 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. 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).

### **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.

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\* \*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.



<p><b>Week 4</b></p>	<p><b>9/17</b> Investigative Performance: Laramie</p> <p><b>9/19</b> Participatory Action Research</p>	<p><b>WATCH &amp; READ:</b> <i>The Laramie Project</i></p> <p><b>READ:</b> "Ethics," Soyini Madison;</p> <p><b>READ:</b> "Suppressing Campus Protests and Political Engagement in U.S. Higher Ed," Charles H.F. Davis III</p>	<p><b>WRITE:</b> Discussion questions</p> <p><b>PREPARE:</b> For group interview</p>
<p><b>Week 5</b></p>	<p><b>9/24</b> Interviews</p> <p><b>9/26</b> Group Interview; Dramatizing transcripts</p>	<p>Individual Interviews</p> <p>TBA</p>	<p><b>DEADLINE:</b> Annotated bibliography DUE; Compile Complete Class Bibliography</p> <p><b>PREPARE:</b> Group interview</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b></p>	<p><b>10/1</b> Decolonial &amp; Trauma-informed theatre approaches</p> <p><b>10/3</b> Story Circle</p>	<p>READ: Bala, "Decolonizing Theatre &amp; Performance Studies;"</p> <p>READ: <a href="#">Making Space: Constant Collaboration;</a></p> <p>READ: "<a href="#">Exploring Trauma-Responsivity and Self-Care,</a>" Redfield</p> <p>READ: TBA</p>	<p>WRITE: Applying trauma-informed practices in rehearsal and classes</p>
<p><b>Week 7:</b></p>	<p><b>10/8</b> Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop</p> <p><b>10/10</b> NO CLASS – MID-SEMESTER BREAK</p>	<p><b>READ:</b> Excerpts from Boal, <i>Theatre of the Oppressed</i></p>	<p><b>BRING:</b> News article or interview transcript for workshop</p>

<b>Week 8</b>	<p>10/15 Midterm Presentations</p> <p>10/17 Midterm Presentations</p>		MIDTERM
<b>Week 9</b>	<p>10/22 Refugee Activism, Healing &amp; Performance</p> <p>10/24 STUDENT-PROFESSOR MEETINGS</p>	<p><b>WATCH:</b> Newcomers Performance Project videos</p> <p><b>READ:</b> Winget, "Newcomers Performance Project"</p> <p><b>READ:</b> <i>My Story Doesn't End</i> by Crossing Pride Coll.</p>	<b>WRITE:</b> Discuss strategies from this work that can be implemented in our project.
<b>Week 10</b>	<p>10/29 Policed Bodies</p> <p>10/31</p>	<p><b>READ:</b> <i>Burgerz</i>, Travis Alabanza</p> <p><b>WATCH:</b> excerpts from the show</p> <p><b>READ:</b> " 'You're too much!' Experiencing the Straightness of Security," Wilkinson</p> <p>Script Development</p>	
<b>Week 11</b>	<p>11/5 – Election Day</p> <p>11/7 Script Development</p>	<p><b>Script Development</b></p> <p><b>TBA</b></p>	<b>DEADLINE: ROUGH DRAFT OF CLASS PROJECT</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	<p>11/12 Script Development</p> <p>11/14</p>		<b>DEADLINE: DRAFT 2 OF CLASS PROJECT</b>



<b>Week 13</b>	<b>11/19 Rehearsals</b>		
	<b>11/21 Rehearsals</b>		
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>11/26 THANKSGIVING</b>		
	<b>11/28 THANKSGIVING</b>		
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>12/3 Rehearsal</b>		
	<b>12/5 Performance</b>		<b>FINAL PERFORMANCE</b>
<b>Week 16</b>	<b>FINALS WEEK – Submit Reflections</b>		

### **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).

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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

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 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.