

THTR 195g – Theatre on Film

62731R/Units: 4

Spring 2025 — MON, WED — 4:00-5:50pm

Location: WPH B28

Instructor: Boni B. Alvarez

Office Hours: by appt: MON, WED – 12:00-2:00pm

Office: MCC 212

Contact Info: bbalvare@usc.edu

(I will reply to your e-mail as soon as I can, but please allow 24 hours for a response.)

Course Assistant: TBD

Contact Info:

Office Hours: by appt

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the theater and its relationship to society through the study of contemporary plays and their respective film adaptations. This course combines the elements of both a theatre literature class and a film study class.

We will study and compare dramatic storytelling in the two mediums – learning how theater and film are similar/differ; how they are in dialogue with one another; how they influence each other; and how they reflect, question & impact society.

This course fulfills the diversity requirement for undergraduate general education.

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn how to ‘read’ contemporary American dramatic texts; how to ‘see’ films; and how to ‘hear’ both.
- Through readings, screenings, class discussion, and short essays, students will develop an understanding of dramatic adaptations.
- This course cultivates students’ dramatic literacy through the analysis of narrative structure, characterization, setting, dialogue, and mise-en-scene.
- Through the creation of original scenes and films, students will develop skills in dramatic art making.
- Through group assignments, students will sharpen ensemble-building and presentational skills.

Required Readings

Texts marked with an asterisk (*) have been ordered through the USC Bookstore. They may also be available online via USC libraries. All other texts will be distributed via Brightspace.

- Harling, Robert. *Steel Magnolias*
- Kushner, Tony. *Angels in America – Part I – Millennium Approaches*
- *Lopez, Josefina. *Real Women Have Curves*
- Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*
- Song, Celine. *Endlings*
- *Wilson, August. *Fences*

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

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Participation – 15%

Students must actively participate in the in-class readings, in-class dramaturgical research exercises, and discussion topics. Students will be evaluated on active engagement and the quality of contributions to discussion. Many ideas, positions, and opinions will arise; students should be respectful and employ empathy in the ensuing dialogue.

Critical Response Paper #1 – 15%

This is a 4-page response to Miller's *The Crucible*, exploring metaphor through the play's dramatic elements (structure, characterization, dialogue, style). A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

DUE – SUN, 2/9 – 11:59pm

Critical Response #2 – 15%

This is a 4-page response to either Washington's *FENCES* OR Ross' *STEEL MAGNOLIAS*. This paper focuses on the film and compares/contrasts the adaptation with its source play. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

DUE – SUN, 4/13 – 11:59pm

Playwriting Scenes – 20%

Students will be divided into groups and will collectively write an original 7-10pg dramatic scene. Scenes will be read in class on **MON 3/10**.

Film Scenes – 20%

Playwriting groups will adapt their scenes into short films (no longer than 10mins). Short films will be screened in class on **WED 4/30**.

Final - *Play Review – 15%

This 5-page paper will review the SDA production of *Angels in America*. Production and performance elements will be evaluated in relation to the reading and analysis of the written text and screening of the film. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

DUE - WED 5/7 - 6:30pm

***Secure your ticket ASAP** as shows sell out quickly.

<https://dramaticarts.usc.edu/angels-in-america-part-one-millennium-approaches-2025/>

Performances are FRI 4/18-SUN 4/27 in the Sanctuary Theatre.

Grading Breakdown

ASSIGNMENT	% of grade
Participation	15
Critical Response Paper #1	15
Critical Response Paper #2	15
Playwriting Scenes	20
Film Scenes	20
Final – Play Review	15
TOTAL	100

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

A+: 100-98	A: 97-94	A-: 93-90
B+: 89-87	B: 86-84	B-: 83-80
C+: 79-77	C: 76-74	C-: 73-70
D+: 69-67	D: 66-64	D-: 63-60
F: 59-0		

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

Additional Policies

Assignment Submission – **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

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

Classroom Etiquette – Please refrain from non-curricular use of devices in class, excessively distracting eating in class, and extracurricular side conversations.

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.

<u>WK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>WEEKLY SCHEDULE</u>
1	MON 1/13 <u>WED 1/15</u>	Introductions; Course Overview <i>Miller's The Crucible</i>
2	MON 1/20 <u>WED 1/22</u>	MLK HOLIDAY – NO CLASS <i>The Crucible (cont)</i>
3	MON 1/27 <u>WED 1/29</u>	<i>The Crucible (cont)</i> Hytner's THE CRUCIBLE (1996)
4	MON 2/3 <u>WED 2/5</u>	Wilson's <i>Fences</i> <i>Fences (cont)</i>
Critical Response Paper #1 DUE – SUN, 2/9 – 11:59pm		
5	MON 2/10 <u>WED 2/12</u>	Washington's FENCES FENCES (cont)
6	MON 2/17 <u>WED 2/19</u>	PRESIDENTS' DAY – NO CLASS <i>Kushner's Angels in America – Part I</i>
7	MON 2/24 <u>WED 2/26</u>	<i>Angels in America – Part I (cont)</i> Nichols' ANGELS IN AMERICA – Part I
8	MON 3/3 <u>WED 3/5</u>	ANGELS IN AMERICA – Part I (cont) ANGELS IN AMERICA – Part I (cont)
9	MON 3/10 <u>WED 3/12</u>	Playwriting Scenes DUE TBA
	MON 3/17 <u>WED 3/19</u>	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK
10	MON 3/24 <u>WED 3/26</u>	TBA TBA
11	MON 3/31 <u>WED 4/2</u>	Harling's <i>Steel Magnolias</i> <i>Steel Magnolias (cont)</i>
12	MON 4/7 <u>WED 4/9</u>	Ross' STEEL MAGNOLIAS (1989) Lopez' <i>Real Women Have Curves</i>
Critical Response Paper #2 DUE – SUN, 4/13 – 11:59pm		
13	MON 4/14 <u>WED 4/16</u>	<i>Real Women Have Curves (cont)</i> Cardoso's REAL WOMEN HAVE CURVES
14	MON 4/21 <u>WED 4/23</u>	Song's <i>Endlings</i> <i>Endlings (cont)</i>
15	MON 4/28 <u>WED 4/30</u>	Song's PAST LIVES Film Adaptations DUE

FINAL - PLAY REVIEW DUE - WED 5/7 - 6:30pm

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

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

Statement for Students with Disabilities

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

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

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

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater Consent Culture Statement:

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

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

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

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

The Office of Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776
<https://osas.usc.edu>

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710
campussupport.usc.edu

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

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.