

**THTR 312 – LGBTQ Theatre**

63257R/Units: 4

SPRING 2025 — MON, WED — 10:00-11:50am

**Location: SOS B37**

**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 Description**

This course explores the range and genealogy of LGBTQ theatre and performance across political, historical, and theatrical contexts. Plays surveyed are from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries of American theatre with specific attention paid to the tropes of ‘coming out’ plays, plays dealing with the AIDS crisis and intersectional ‘identity’ plays.

**Learning Objectives**

- Students will broaden their dramatic literacy with a specific appreciation for LGBTQ playwrights and plays.
- This course cultivates the students' abilities for dramatic analysis and critical thinking via class discussion and through writing essays on close readings of the texts.
- Students will develop a knowledge of plays dealing with the AIDS crisis.
- Students will learn to identify queer tropes in dramatic narratives.
- Through the readings of LGBTQ texts, students will learn how playwrights shape queerness for presentation and performance.

**Required Readings**

Text marked with an asterisk (\*) has been ordered through the USC Bookstore. All other texts will be distributed via Brightspace.

- Birkenmeier, Liza. *Dr. Ride's American Beach House*
- Christopher, J. Julian. *Julio Down By The Schoolyard*
- Deen, Mashuq Mushtaq. *Draw the Circle*
- Hunter, Samuel D. *The Whale*
- Jackson, Michael R. *A Strange Loop*
- Kramer, Larry. *The Normal Heart*
- \*Kron, Lisa & Tesori, Jeanine. *Fun Home*
- Pamatmat, A. Rey. *Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them*
- Silbiger, Daphne. *Six Years Old*

## **Additional Readings**

The following texts will be distributed electronically:

- Drake, David. *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me*
- Sanchez, Edwin. *Trafficking in Broken Hearts*
- Vogel, Paula. *Baltimore Waltz*
- Yew, Chay. *A Language of Their Own*

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

## **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

### **Participation – 15%**

Students must actively participate in the discussion topics, demonstrate preparedness of the assigned readings, and practice active listening & engagement. Many ideas and opinions will arise; students should be respectful and employ empathy in discussion.

### **Close Reading Paper – 20%**

This paper will deal with a close reading of a scene from *Fun Home* OR *Edith Can Shoot Things* OR *Six Years Old*. This paper will examine a particular scene, excerpt, or song, through a lens of 'coming out'. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

### **Midterm - Group Presentation – 25%**

Students will be divided into groups; each group will be assigned a contemporary play which grapples with the AIDS epidemic. Groups will present on the play's historical and theatrical relation to Kramer's *The Normal Heart*. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

### **Critical Analysis Paper – 25%**

This paper will examine notions of the queer body as dramatized in *Dr. Ride's American Beach House* OR *Julio Down By The Schoolyard* OR *The Whale* OR *Strange Loop*. Papers must have a thesis and include textual evidence. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

### **Final Assignment – 15%**

A final assignment surveying the texts studied over the course of the semester, evaluating what essential elements a play requires to fall under the umbrella of LGBTQ Theatre. A more detailed prompt will be distributed.

### Grading Breakdown

ASSIGNMENT	% of grade
Participation	15
Close Reading Paper	20
Midterm - Group Presentation	25
Analysis Paper	25
Final Assignment	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

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

A+: 100-98      A: 97-94      A-: 93-90      B+: 89-87      B: 86-84      B-: 83-80  
C+: 79-77      C: 76-74      C-: 73-70      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 disruptive eating, 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>
<b>1 LGBTQ THEATRE – Search for definition/meaning</b>		
	MON 1/13	Introductions; Fornes' <i>Mud</i> ; Son's <i>Stop Kiss</i>
	WED 1/15	Brittain's <i>Rotterdam</i> ; Williams' <i>Glass Menagerie</i>
<b>2 COMING OUT/OF-AGE</b>		
	MON 1/20	<b>MLK HOLIDAY – NO CLASS</b>
	<u>WED 1/22</u>	<u>Kron &amp; Tesori's <i>Fun Home</i></u>
3	MON 1/27	<i>Fun Home</i> (cont)
	<u>WED 1/29</u>	<u><i>Fun Home</i> (cont)</u>
4	MON 2/3	Pamatmat's <i>Edith Can Shoot Things</i>
	<u>WED 2/5</u>	<u><i>Edith Can Shoot Things</i> (cont)</u>
5	MON 2/10	Silbiger's <i>Six Years Old</i>
	<u>WED 2/12</u>	<u><i>Six Years Old</i> (cont)</u>
<b>CLOSE READING PAPER DUE – FRI, 2/14 – 11:59pm</b>		
6	MON 2/17	<b>PRESIDENTS' DAY – NO CLASS</b>
	<u>WED 2/19</u>	<u>Birkenmeier's <i>Dr. Ride's American Beach House</i></u>
7	MON 2/24	<i>Dr. Ride's American Beach House</i> (cont)
<b>AIDS</b>		
	<u>WED 2/26</u>	<u>Kramer's <i>The Normal Heart</i></u>
8	MON 3/3	<i>The Normal Heart</i> (cont)
	<u>WED 3/5</u>	<u><i>The Normal Heart</i> (cont)</u>
9	MON 3/10	<b>MIDTERM – GROUP PRESENTATIONS (in-class)</b>
	<u>WED 3/12</u>	<u>TBA</u>
	MON 3/17	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
	<u>WED 3/19</u>	<u><b>SPRING BREAK</b></u>
<b>10 IDENTITIES &amp; INTERSECTIONALITIES</b>		
	MON 3/24	<b>TBA</b>
	<u>WED 3/26</u>	<u><b>TBA</b></u>
11	MON 3/31	Christopher's <i>Julio Down By The Schoolyard</i>
	<u>WED 4/2</u>	<u><i>Julio Down By The Schoolyard</i> (cont)</u>
12	MON 4/7	Hunter's <i>The Whale</i>
	<u>WED 4/9</u>	<u><i>The Whale</i> (cont)</u>
13	MON 4/14	<i>The Whale</i> (cont)
	<u>WED 4/16</u>	<u>Jackson's <i>Strange Loop</i></u>
<b>CRITICAL ANALYSIS DUE – SUN, 4/20 – 11:59pm</b>		
14	MON 4/21	<i>Strange Loop</i> (cont)
	<u>WED 4/23</u>	<u>Deen's <i>Draw the Circle</i></u>
15	MON 4/28	<i>Draw the Circle</i> (cont)
	<u>WED 4/30</u>	<u>Wrap-up</u>

**FINAL MON 5/12 – 8:00-10:00am**

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct:

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

### Statement for Students with Disabilities

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

### Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

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

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

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

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### SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

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

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

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### Support Systems:

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

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

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://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](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

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

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

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

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*  
[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

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

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

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

*USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*  
[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

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

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*  
[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

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

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

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

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

Non-emergency assistance or information.