

Fall/Winter 2019-2020

AP/EN 4140 6.0A (Y)

Contemporary Drama

Course Director:

Marcia Blumberg

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Office Hours: Wednesday & Thursday, 12:30pm - 1:30pm + by appointment

Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Thursdays, 2:30pm - 5:30pm, VH-1152

Description:

Provoking Drama: Contemporary concerns in the international political arena

Provocative, confrontational, sensational, scandalous—these are adjectives critics often use to describe theatrical art that shocks and unremittingly confronts the societal status quo while also intensely challenging formal norms. Theatre has participated in this phenomenon in different ways over the centuries. This course engages with playwrights who have in the past three decades uniquely conceived of drama as politically and aesthetically interventionist in the contemporary theatre of global politics. Specifically, we will investigate two interrelated areas, namely, the politics/theatre of war and torture, and the politics/theatre of gender, sexuality, and family. We will read plays from Britain, Canada, Chile, Ireland, Poland, Scotland, South Africa and the United States. The course analyzes cultural and political contexts, specificities of time and place, aspects of race, class, gender and power differentials, in order to interrogate theatrical, formal, thematic, and theoretical issues that speak with urgency to the times in which we live. We will attend to the shock value of the plays when they premiered and ask whether the same response occurs years later, namely, today. Of these plays that challenge contemporary conventional values, we shall ask such questions as: What casts of mind are confronted? What formal, political, and ethical issues are tested?

Category:

B

Historical Requirement:

NA

Requirements:

Assignment 1 Theatre review (3-4 pages) = 15%

Assignment 2 Comparative essay (7-8 pages) = 20%

Assignment 3 Comparative research essay (9-10 pages)= 30%

Annotated Bibliography=10%

10 or more unannounced quizzes =15% (If you are absent from class and miss a test then you receive 0 and cannot make it up)

Class participation 10%

Reading List:

Gregory Burke, *Black Watch* (Faber); Caryl Churchill, *Far Away* (CK), *Ding Dong*, *The Wicked*; Nadia Davids, *At Her Feet: the playscript* (Oxford UP) Ariel Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden* (Penguin USA); Yael Farber, *Molara* (Oberon); Yael Farber *Mies Julie* (Oberon); Rebecca Gilman. *Boy Gets Girl* (Faber & Faber); Janus Glowacki, *Antigone in New York* (Samuel French); David Hare, *Stuff Happens* (Faber); Sarah Kane, *Blasted* (CK); Moises Kauffmann, *The Laramie Project* (DPS); Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: Part I Millenium Approaches* (TCG); David Mamet, *Oleanna* (DPS); Martin McDonagh, *The Pillowman* (DPS); Lara Foot Newton, *Tshepang : The Third Testament* (Wits University Press or Oberon); Lynn Nottage, *Ruined* (TCG); Harold Pinter, *Mountain Language* (DPS), *New World Order* (CK); John Patrick Shanley, *Doubt* (DPS); Wallace Shawn, *Aunt Dan and Lemon* (DPS); Simon Stephens, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* (DPS); Jane Taylor, *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (CK); Judith Thompson, *Palace of the End* (Playwrights Canada Press); Doug Wright, *I am My Own Wife* (DPS).

The course kit contains a few plays as well as readings.

CK= Course Kit; DPS= Dramatists Play Service;
TCG= Theatre Communications Group

Open To:

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