

TH 482/582 Playwriting I Spring 2010

Instructor: Steven Burch
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Tu,Th 2-3:15pm
RJ 204

Office Hours: Tues. 1-2:30pm or by appointment

Required reading:

Burch, *Course Reader* [CR]

Recommended reading:

Citron, *Playwriting*

Cole: *Playwrights on Playwriting*

Garrison: *The Playwright's Survival Guide*

Goldman, *The Season*

Herrington, *The Playwright's Muse*

McKee, *Story*

Packard, *The Art of the Playwright*

Sweet: *The Dramatist's Toolkit*

Purpose:

To introduce the principle elements of classic dramatic structure through a series of readings and writing exercises, and to assist in the writing of a student's original one-act play. At the end of the course, students will have completed an original one-act play.

Method:

Readings from the required Course Reader, writing exercises, in-class readings of students' works and commentary, occasional videos, attendance of university play productions, student presentations, and a midterm exam, and the completion of a one-act play by the semester's end.

Learner-Centered Outcomes:

Each student will be able to

- a. understand and apply the principles of dramatic narrative through readings
- b. analyze the structure of dramatic narrative through writing exercises and in-class criticism
- c. craft both short one-act and longer narratives for performance

Attendance:

Mandatory. Our growth comes from reading our works to our peers and commenting on others' works. We have a responsibility to engage with the readings of others and ourselves. You have a total of two (2) unexcused absences that may be used. Any further absences will result in a lowering of your grade by 100 points/absence. Likewise tardiness will not be tolerated. We have 75 minutes per session and we haven't the time to squander them. After two (2) late arrivals, you will be docked one absence for every two tardy classes.

Course Requirements:

Five writing assignments, plus a Monologue assignment; three written play reviews; individual student presentations; a midterm exam; and a completed one-act play with three re-writes. Also, your full participation in class discussions, exercises and projects. Any missed assignments will be accepted at later than the scheduled date but will receive a lower grade, unless approved prior to the date by the instructor.

Missed Exams and Homework

All homework assignments and exams must be made up with the instructor's permission. Excused absences shall favor the student, but the student must present valid medical forms or consult with the professor before the absence occurs.

Academic Misconduct:

Cheating or plagiarism will be severely penalized. Papers must be original work written by you and only you for this class. Downloads from web sites or adaptations from previous course work are unacceptable. Consult the Student Handbook, which is available from Student Services, for a complete definition of academic misconduct.

Disabilities:

To request disability accommodations, please contact Disabilities Services at 348-4285. After initial arrangements are made with this office, contact your professor.

Addenda:

All cell phones and beepers **MUST** be turned off for the duration of the class. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS** to this rule.

Grading:

Writing assignments @ 100 points each	=	500 pts.
Monologues @ 50 points	=	50
Midterm exam @ 100 points	=	100
Play reviews @ 25 points each	=	75
Completed play @ 200 points	=	200
Class @ 75 points	=	<u>75</u>
Total	=	1000 points

Schedule: (always subject to change)

<u>Wk#</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Assignment/Reading</u>
1	1/12	Beginnings	CR: Nature of Drama CR: (Ramsey)
	1/14	Speed writing	Letter exercise, photos CR: McLaughlin
2	1/19	Action Reading letters	CR: <i>Zoo Story</i> CR: Drama is Action 2-5 pages (#1, based on your photo) CR: Ten Commandments
	1/21	assignment/presentation 1	
3	1/26	Stakes Reading letters	CR: <i>Highway 66</i> CR: What are the Stakes? 2-5 pages (#2)
	1/28	assignment/presentation 1	
4	2/2	Structure Reading #1	CR: Exposition CR: <i>Private Lives</i> CR: Exercise (<i>Night and Day</i>), 2-5 pages
	2/4	assignment/presentation 2	
<i>The Winter's Tale</i> (Shakespeare), Feb. 9-14, Allen Bales			
5	2/9	Language Reading #2	pinch & ouch CR: Language CR: <i>Words, Words, Words</i> 2-5 pages (#4)
	2/11	assignment/presentation 3	
6	2/16	Conflict Reading #3 Review due	CR: Building a Story CR: <i>Bedtime Story</i> CR: Nine Questions Review due
	2/18	reading #3 Assignment/presentation 4	
<i>Saint Joan</i> (Shaw), Feb. 23-28, Gallaway			
7	2/23	Stereotypes Reading #4	CR: Stereotypes CR: <i>Most Massive Woman Wins</i> 2-5 pages (#5)
	2/25	assignment/presentation 5	

8	3/2	Midterm Exam Review due	
	3/4	No Class (SETC)	
9	3/9	Your Stories	CR: Your Story
		Reading #5	CR: <i>Talk to me Like the Rain</i>
	3/11	Musicals	CR: Musical Comedy Book
SPRING BREAK March 15-19			
10	3/23	Monologues Reading #6	1-2 pages monologues (I'm lost...) CR : <i>New-Found Land</i>
	3/25	Monologues	
11	3/30 4/1	First Draft presentations	
12	4/6 4/8	First Draft presentations	
13	4/13 <i>The Violet Hour (Greenberg), Apr 13-18, Allen Bales</i> 4/17	Second Draft presentations	
14	4/20 <i>Candide (Bernstein, Wheeler, Wilbur, Sondheim, LaTouche), Apr 20-25, Morgan</i> 4/22	Third Draft Review due presentations	
15	4/27 4/29	Wrap-Up Review Due presentations presentations; Last Class	

FINAL PLAY READINGS (EXAM): TBA