

PLAYWRITING

Fall 2020 – Online
T/Th 9:35am – 11:30am

Professor: Dr. Charlie Mitchell
Office Phone: (352) 273-0515
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 12:00-2:00pm or by appointment. I will have a Zoom meeting scheduled during office hours (see link on Canvas).
Email: cmitchell@ufl.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

This workshop is a structured environment where you will explore the craft of writing for the stage. For this semester (and hopefully beyond), you will all become practicing playwrights exploring the development of dramatic ideas. In this class, you will be encouraged to find your own voice with the understanding that theatre is a very practical and specific medium and some techniques work better than others. I am here to guide your work, not dictate or censor it. The overall course objective is the completion of a one-act play.

REQUIREMENTS

- You will be given writing assignments to do in and out of class.
- Your midterm assignment will be to write a ten-minute play.
- Your final project in this course is the final draft of a one-act play, i.e., approximately thirty polished pages of dialogue and stage directions.

TEXTBOOK

Your textbook is *The Playwright's Guidebook: An Insightful Primer on the Art of Dramatic Writing* by Stuart Spencer (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002). ISBN: 0571199917. Copies should be available in the bookstore. Other readings will come in the form of handouts.

EXPECTATIONS

- Every week, you will write a scene which will be read and discussed.
- You will be expected to participate as a reader. Although I fully understand that you may not be an actor, you should put in the same effort that you would want for your own material.
- The exposure of your writing to your peers is an essential part of the class. Since any project under development is vulnerable to criticism, it is absolutely crucial that your feedback remain as objective and constructive as possible. It is much more valuable than praise.
- An understanding that writing is rewriting.

ATTENDANCE

Due to conditions caused by spread of the coronavirus, this class will be conducted online. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will

need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

You can miss two unexcused classes without penalty. After two, any absence from class for the following reasons must be supported by official acceptable documentation to avoid a grade penalty:

- illness—doctor's note must be on official letterhead with address and phone number, noting the date and time of visit and diagnosis verifying that an absence from class is warranted, doctor name and signature
- serious family emergencies
- special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
- military obligation
- severe weather conditions
- participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate
- court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)

Religious observances do not require documentation but you should inform me by the end of the second week of classes of any religious observances that will conflict with class attendance.

Barring the above circumstances, students are expected to be in attendance daily and to be on time. The first "unexcused" absence will result in a half letter grade (5%) deducted from the final grade. All additional "unexcused" absences will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) from the final grade.

PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE

You are required to see three productions during the course of the semester. Be prepared to discuss them in class. By decision of the faculty in the School of Theatre and Dance, the following statement is included on all departmental syllabi: Since production is the laboratory for all theatre courses, attendance at all mainstage Department of Theatre and Dance productions is required of students enrolled in classes with the following prefix designations: THE, TPA, TPP, ORI.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

If you have a disability that is documented with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>) and wish to discuss accommodations, contact me as soon as possible. If you have a learning disability that has NOT been documented, contact the DRC at 352.392.8565 or email accessuf@dso.ufl.edu.

GRADING

I grade ongoing work on progress, i.e., from the first draft to the last. I look for effort, imagination, effectiveness, and if you have addressed the demands of the assignment.

Participation	20%
Writing Assignments	40%
10-minute play	10%
Final play (incl. drafts)	30%

- A 93-100
- A- 90-92
- 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- 60-63
- E 59-

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.