

THE 4930-25498: Special Topics: Latinx Theatre
T/TH 3:00-4:55pm
MAT 0112

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Theatre created by Latinx playwrights and performers has served as a vehicle for both artistic expression and social and political change. Organized geographically, this course considers themes and trends in Latin American and US Latinx Theatre in light of issues such as hybridized identities, language, immigration, oppression and generational conflict. Representative works by Latin American and US Latinx playwrights will be examined and will be supplemented by critical texts, film and recordings of live performance. Through analysis of these texts and their productions, students will gain an understanding of common themes and distinct styles of Latinx performance.

College of the Arts Meta-Strategy 2021-2025: Systemic Resilience

The University of Florida College of the Arts intends to be a transformative community, responding to and generating paradigmatic shifts in the arts and beyond. We do so by:

- Embracing the complexity of our evolving human experience and seeking to empower our students and faculty to shape that experience fearlessly through critical study, creative practice, and provocation.
- Collaborating effectively with the forces of change.
- Preparing students to access and unsettle centers of power in a radically changing world.
- Facilitating an arts education that will position emerging artists and researchers as catalysts for equity on local and global levels.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify common major themes in plays/performances of Latin American and US Latinx theatre artists.
- Analyze and explain structures of power, privilege and disenfranchisement that have led to the creation of particular styles of theatre associated with Latin American and US Latinx artists.
- Explain the development of Latinx Theatre as a mode of social justice and change.
- Explain the contributions of Latinx theatre artists to Theatre of the Americas.
- Synthesize learning through the creation of a dramatic piece for presentation

REQUIRED PLAYS*

Nilo Cruz, *Anna in the Tropics* (Dramatists Play Service, 2005)

Kristoffer Diaz, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Samuel French, 2011)

Maria Irene Fornes, *Letters from Cuba* (PAJ, 2007)

Griselda Gambaro *Information for Foreigners* (Northwestern University Press, 1992)

Quiara Alegria Hudes, *Eliot, A Soldier's Fugue* (Dramatists Play Service, 2008)

Dominique Morisseau, *Blood at the Root* (Samuel French, 2017)

Alvaro Saar Rios, *On the Wings of a Mariposa*

***PLEASE NOTE:** Many of the plays we will study have been written in response to systems of oppression. As such, they contain difficult material, including but not limited to gendered & sexual violence, racial & ethnic violence, and depictions of PTSD. Summaries of each play can be found on our Canvas page if you find it helpful to have some advance knowledge of the material. If you feel that you

will be unable to read and/or participate in discussion and activities around a specific play, please check in with me as soon as possible so that we can make alternate arrangements for you to complete work necessary to fulfill your obligation to the course.

REQUIRED LISTENING:

Arthur Laurents, Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins and Stephen Sondheim, *West Side Story* (OBC)

Paul Simon and Derek Walcott, *The Capeman*

Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegria Hudes, *In the Heights* (OBC)

REQUIRED VIEWING:

Zoot Suit (1981)

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS, VIEWINGS, LISTENING

Additional Readings, Viewings, and Listening are listed in the schedule on the syllabus. Readings and/or links will be posted on Canvas

ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Participation and attendance (20% of final grade) are required. Discussion and on-our-feet activities will be an integral part of our class meetings, and the extent to which you participate will impact your grade. We're here to learn from each other and your meaningful contributions to discussion and active engagement makes for a fun class! Please come to class prepared, having read the daily assignments.

***Please note:** Attendance will be required at the “Disaster & the Body” virtual evening event on Monday, April 19 from 6-8pm (see details in course schedule, below). You will receive a “trade off” day on March 11, when class will not meet. In addition,

Discussion Guidelines (to be developed in collaboration with class)

- Lead with compassion
- “Oops/Ouch”
- ?
- ?
- ?

Attendance Policy: In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place:

- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>), please use the UF Health screening system (<https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect/covid-19-exposure-and-symptoms-who-do-i-call-if/>) and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>).
- Barring the above circumstances, students are expected to be in attendance (either remotely or in-person, as assigned) daily and to be on time. Students are allowed 2 “unexcused” absences that do not require documentation and do not conform to the UF “acceptable reasons for absence.” Any other “unexcused” absence will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) from the final grade per “unexcused” absence. To be considered “excused” an absence must be accompanied by appropriate official documentation. Religious observances do not require documentation.
- 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)

Presentation (20% of final grade) on a topic listed in the syllabus (**You will submit your top three choices in the first week of class**). Your ten-minute presentation should be thoughtful, well-organized, show your understanding of the topic, and clearly communicate to & enhance your audience's understanding of the material. You should be prepared to respond to questions from the class. Feel free to get creative, use visual/audio aids or performance! Your presentation, along with a bibliography of your sources will be due to Canvas on the day of your presentation. Specific guidelines will be posted to Canvas.

50 Playwrights Paper/50 Playwrights Day (15%) The 50 Playwrights Project gives us access to as-yet unproduced plays by Latinx playwrights. We will support them through this assignment while expanding our library of Latinx plays! Select a play from the 50 Playwrights Project and read it. Note the following: (1) What notable themes or trends are present in the play, (2) what is the playwrights' contribution to Latinx Theatre, (3) how this play might be in dialogue with other things we have read/studied, and (4) your reactions to the play. On your assigned 50 Playwrights Day, we will discuss your findings as a group and you will submit your notes to Canvas. **You will submit your top three choices of due date** for this assignment in the first week of class. <https://50playwrights.org/>

Read & Respond (25%) Over the course of the semester, you will read plays, articles, blog posts, and you will listen to three musicals. For each unit, you will post a response to a prompt that will allow you to make connections between various materials we are covering in class. **You will be given a choice to respond through various avenues** (essay, discussion board, flipgrid video, Perusall) Specific guidelines for each Read & Respond will be posted to Canvas. ***Please Note:** one of your Read & Respond assignments will depend upon your required attendance at the "Disaster & the Body" event on Monday, April 19 (see details on course schedule, below).

Group Final Project (25% of final grade) Here is a chance to get creative! You will work in a small group. (1) **choose a topic surrounding Latinx Theatre that interests you**. Perhaps it is a playwright, a performer, a theatre company, a style of performance or a particular play. (2) Prepare a creative piece to share with the class in conjunction with this topic. For example, if you chose a particular play or playwright, you might take roles of director and designers and prepare a concept for your production, finding inspiration in art, music, or nature. You may direct a short scene presented in class that demonstrates a particular concept. You may choose to write a short performance piece in the style of an *acto* that is performed in class. Whatever you choose, your project should demonstrate your knowledge of concepts and material that we have covered in class and should explore new connections. Your final presentation should not exceed 15 minutes. A brief proposal explaining what you plan to do will be due prior to the final presentation. A 750 to 1000-word "connection and reflection" paper will accompany your project. If you have an idea that excites you, let me know and we will work together to develop your final project! Additional guidelines will be posted on Canvas.

Examples of past final presentations:

- An analysis of three different actresses who have played Evita, with a student's performative interpretation of each approach

- A discussion of the use of food in Latinx plays as the student led the class through preparing (and eating!) guacamole
- A short, student-created documentary film discussing performative aspects of Día de los Muertos
- A discussion with Frida Kahlo (Latinx-identifying student in-role as Frida)
- A student directed and acted scene by a Latinx playwright
- A children's theatre activity focusing on a Latinx folktale

University Policies:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Online Course Evaluation Process:

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/publicresults/>.”

UF Honesty Policy:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness:

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out.

- Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
- University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Academic Resources:

- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.
- Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- Library Support <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints

- On-Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honorcode-studentconduct-code/>
- On-Line: <http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/>

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

(readings/assignments are **DUE** on the date listed. **This schedule is subject to change**)

Tuesday 1/12 Introduction to course

Thursday 1/14 Latinx Representation in US Theatre; Translation
Due: Top Three Presentation Choices

Tuesday 1/19 Read & Respond: Hudes, *Elliot: A Soldier's Fugue* & Ybarra, "How to Read a Latinx Play in the 21st Century"

BRAZIL

Thursday 1/21 Brazil: Theatre of the Oppressed
50 PP Day #1:

Tuesday 1/26 Read & Respond: Boal, "Theatre of the Oppressed"
Possible Presentations: Saudade Theatre Company
Gustavo Melo Cerqueira

Thursday 1/28 Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop

THE SOUTHERN CONE

Tuesday 2/2 Argentina & Chile: the Dirty Wars & the Pinochet Regime
Possible Presentations: Víctor Jara
Egon Wolff
Los Desaparecidos
Amazonas Network

Thursday 2/4 Immersive Theatre Techniques in Latinx Performance
Read & Respond: Gambaro, *Information for Foreigners*
50 PP Day #2:

Tuesday 2/9 Read & Respond: Gartner, The Rise of Women in Chilean Theatre
<https://howlround.com/rise-women-chilean-theatre>

CHICANX THEATRE

Thursday 2/11 Chicana Theatre & the Worker's Movement
In-class Viewing: *Zoot Suit*

Tuesday 2/16 El Teatro Campesino Workshop
Read & Respond (Perusall): Valdez, "What is Chicano Theatre," "Actos" and "Preface"
Possible Presentations: Cesar Chavez & Robert Kennedy
Hugo Salcedo
Luis Valdez

Thursday 2/18 A Visit From Alvaro Saar Rios!
Read & Submit Two Questions for the Playwright: Rios: *On the Wings of a Mariposa*
Possible Presentations: Frida Kahlo
Sor Juana de la Cruz
Lowrider Culture

THE CARIBBEAN

Tuesday 2/23 Cuban Representation
Possible Presentations: The Cuban Revolution
Ybor City
Baseball in Cuba

50 PP Day #3:

Thursday 2/25 No class meeting: Recharge Day

Tuesday 3/2 Cuban Representation
Read & Respond: Cruz, *Anna in the Tropics*

Thursday 3/4 Cuban Representation
Read & Respond (Perusall): Meyer-Garcia, <https://howlround.com/dreaming-body-exile>
Possible Presentations: Carmelita Tropicana
Coco Fusco
Yoruba and Santeria Practices in the Caribbean

50 PP Day #4:

Tuesday 3/9 Haitian Representation
Possible Presentations: Duvalier Dictatorship
Bond Street Theatre
2010 Haiti Earthquake

50 PP Day #5:

Thursday 3/11 **No class meeting:** Traded for Disaster & the Body event on Monday 4/19

Tuesday 3/16 Haitian Representation
Read & Respond: Morisseau, *Blood at the Root*

Thursday 3/18 Haitian Representation
Read & Respond (Perusall): Johnson, "The Artist-Activist: History and Healing Through Art"
Due: Final Topic Proposal (1 paragraph submitted on behalf of the entire group)
50 PP: Day #6:

Tuesday 3/23 TBD

Thursday 3/25 Puerto Rican Representation/A Visit From Y No Habia Luz!
Watch & Submit Two Questions for the Artists: YNHL video links

LATINX PLAYS & POPULAR CULTURE

Tuesday 3/30 Stereotypes and Popular Entertainment
Possible Presentations: Lucha Libre
Popular Music in Mexico
Contemporary Latinx figures in film & television

Thursday 4/1 Read & Respond: Diaz, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*
50 PP Day #7:

Tuesday 4/6 Read & Respond (Perusall): Jorge Huerta, “Looking for the Magic”
Possible Presentations: Popular music in the Caribbean
Miguel Pinero
Elian Gonzalez
50 PP Day #8:

MUSICAL THEATRE

Thursday 4/8 Latinx Representation in American Musical Theatre
Listen & Respond: *West Side Story*; *The Capeman*; *In the Heights*
Possible Presentations: *On Your Feet*
West Side Story on film
NYC Barrio Culture
50 PP Day #9:

Tuesday 4/13 Latinx Representation in American Musical Theatre
Read & Respond (Perusall): Elena Machado Saéz, “Bodega Sold Dreams”
50 PP Day #10:

Thursday 4/15 Final Project Presentations

Monday 4/19 **REQUIRED ATTENDANCE:** “Disaster & the Body” virtual event 6-8pm

Tuesday 4/20 Final project presentations

Check Out These Additional Resources:

100 Latinx Plays!

<https://howlround.com/101-plays-new-americans-or-latinidad>

Pajaritos: A Chicago Latinx Theatre Podcast

<http://altachicago.org/pajaritos>

HowlRound Latinx Theatre Commons

<https://howlround.com/ltx>