Playwriting Workshop (TPP 4600)
Fall 2022 – Architecture 0423
T/Th 9:35am – 11:30am

Professor: Dr. Charlie Mitchell
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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 complete 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 30 or more polished pages of dialogue and stage directions.

TEXTBOOK
Readings will come in the form of handouts.

EXPECTATIONS
- Attend every class and be on time.
- Accept that writing is rewriting.
- Every week, you will write a scene which will be read and discussed.
- 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.
- To give objective and constructive feedback. The exposure of your writing to your peers is an essential part of the class. Feedback is much more valuable than praise.

ATTENDANCE
You can miss two unexcused classes without penalty. The first "unexcused" absence will result in a half letter grade (5%) deducted from your final grade. All additional "unexcused" absences will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) from the final grade.

The following absences are excused:

- illness (w/ doctor's note)
- 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 (not Rec Sports) 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.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

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, please contact the DRC immediately.

GRADING
I grade ongoing work on progress, i.e., from the first draft to the last. I look for effort, imagination, effectiveness, and whether 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	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	E	59-

AVAILABILITY
If you have something you want to discuss with me, feel free to call me or stop by during my office hours. You are never "bothering" me. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, see me before or after class and we will come up with another time to meet.

COVID-19
If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details

on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/vaccinations-2/vaccine-availability/.

HONOR CODE

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University." ***If you cheat on a test or quiz, or plagiarize material, i.e., use someone else's words or ideas without attribution, you will automatically receive a failing grade in this class.*** Ignorance of the definition of plagiarism or the absence of intent to deceive does not constitute an acceptable defense in matters of scholarly dishonesty.

EVALUATIONS

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/.

Advice:

Always know what your characters want from each other. Always raise the stakes.

At first, try to limit the number of characters in your scenes to two. I'd rather see you fully develop a couple of characters than have scenes chock full of underdeveloped ones.

Starters:

Start or end a scene with the line "I have no place else to go."

Write a scene where one character wants an object from another.

Flesh out two characters. Provide as much detail as you possibly can about each one - their attributes, past, hopes and dreams, etc. Put them in the same room and see what happens.

Write a scene where one character has a secret.

Write a scene with an absolutely clear climax.

Pick a ritual of some kind (wedding, funeral, etc.) and disrupt it in some way.

Write a scene were two characters have "unfinished business."

Write a scene where an old relationship is rekindled in some way.

Write a scene where an older person is trying to teach a younger person or vice versa.

Pick an episode in your own life and dramatize it (as loosely as you wish).

Take an incident from a news story and dramatize it (as loosely as you wish).

Pick a single poetic image (a fire, rain, artwork, monument, etc.) and include it in your scene in some fashion.

Write a scene with a pressing time limit (train leaving, sunrise coming, etc.).

Write a scene where a sensual experience (it doesn't have to be sex) plays a large part.

Write a scene where one character is a "fish out of water."

Write a scene where one character completely misunderstands the intentions of another.

Write a scene where there is no speaking, only action (stage directions only).

Write a scene that takes place after some kind of disaster.

Write a scene where some sort of costume or piece of music is central.

Tape a conversation between two people (with permission of course) and then transform it into a scene.

Write a love scene or seduction scene.

Write a scene where one or two characters speak using a special language (lingo, slang, etc.).

Write a series of very short scenes that are connected but have a recognizable beginning, middle and end.