



**THE 497: VOICES FROM THE ALTERNATIVE CANON
COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2021
T/TR 12:30-1:45 p.m.
VIRTUAL CLASSROOM & ONLINE**

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105
Office Hours: M 2-4 p.m., T/R 11 a.m.-noon; W noon-2 p.m. or by appointment
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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

PLAY LIST IN PROGRESS (TBD)

Course Description:

A survey of dramatic literature that seeks to centralize plays beyond the canon. Particular attention will be given to issues of visibility, accessibility, and the diversification of theatre in a contemporary context. We will study plays and other theatre documents across history, paying particular attention to issues of what it means to be marginalized.

Prerequisite:

THE 1310-Introduction to the Theatre or permission of the instructor

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. To examine and appreciate the legacy of influential, yet marginalized, practitioners in theatre history.
2. To gain a more complete understanding of the ways in which the Westernized theatrical canon generally causes erasure of marginalized peoples.
3. To develop a working knowledge of the diverse history of theatre practitioners that will assist students in thinking critically regarding visibility and accessibility of artistic work.

Course Ethics and Attendance: *Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation.*

Promptness, attendance, and “attentiveness” are valued in this class. Please behave accordingly and do not disrupt the class with excessive talk or the use of cell phones or other devices. It is assumed that students will work cooperatively with one another and all work that is not “original” will be properly credited. See the TAMUC *Student’s Guide Handbook* for more information on plagiarism. This is a serious offense that can result in separation from the university. **EVEN if not specifically noted on instructions or prompts for each assignment, plagiarism policies will be strictly enforced.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

Active Participation (10 pts): Your active participation will play a substantial role in acquiring your final grade – for good reason! This course is structured to support a “community of learners.” In order to contribute to the community, you must come to class fully alert, prepared, and ready to actively participate in discussions of assigned readings or engagement in determined activities, etc. Be aware that the “participation” aspect of your grade requires more than simply being present or arriving to class on time (although absences and late arrivals/early departures will significantly reduce your active participation grade). *Please keep in mind that you must be present in order to participate.* Lack of demonstrable preparation will have a substantial negative impact on your course grade.

You should realize the importance of acquiring skill in voicing your opinions during discussion in positive and respectful ways. Realize that sometimes you will have to agree to disagree with other members of the class. As I know that you all can do: avoid “knee-jerk reactions” and frame your comments respectfully, with scholarly intelligence, and as a point of academic discourse. *Disrespect, rudeness, or offensive language of any kind has no place in the classroom. If such an instance occurs (either toward another student or the instructor), I will ask the student to leave and/or substantial points will be reduced from the student’s Active Participation grade.*

Participation grades will be calculated daily and reflected upon/tabulated at the end of the semester. *Each student will begin with a mid-passing Participation grade of 8 points.* Strong effort or lack of effort during each class and over the course of the semester as a whole will either raise or lower that grade.

Reflective Questions (Best 20 @ 1.5 pt = 30 pts.): Each student will complete reflective questions for each play reading. These can be in whatever format you choose (bullet points usually work best) but should follow Anne Fliotsos’s “Reflective Questions about the Play” exercise (handout posted in D2L).

Article/Resource Presentations (2 @ 5 pts = 10 pts total): Each presentation will summarize an article or resource (website, etc.) found in theatre resources (suggestions include: peer-reviewed theatre journals, book chapters, articles published on reputable theatre websites such as HowlRound or American Theatre Magazine, etc.). Presentations can be informal. Students will also provide a short (one-page) handout outlining the main ideas in the resource for myself and their classmates (please include citations). The resources can relate to anything we are covering in class, including the organizing principle of what it means to be marginalized and our other questions.

Reading Presentations (2 @ 10 pts = 20 pts.): Over the course of the semester, you will lead two discussions over assigned readings, as well as provide supplementary material in the form of visual aids. Each presentation/discussion should last approximately **10 minutes**. You are responsible for leading and facilitating the class discussion – not just summarizing points and lecturing to the class. You should plan your presentation very carefully as you are developing a

short lesson plan (shorter presentations will receive substantial grade deductions). Information in your presentation should include (among other topics): 1) biographical history of the playwright; 2) other works by the playwright; 2) background information about the play/topics addressed within the play. You should provide the class with a handout or study guide (uploaded to our Google Drive prior to your presentation).

One of the goals of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to hone your teaching and presentation skills. Be imaginative in your presentational strategies, including audiovisual material, activities, etc. You will be graded on the content of your presentation/handout, the structure/construction of your presentation/handout, ability to lead class discussion effectively, ability to field your peers' questions, and the overall professionalism/preparedness exhibited.

Research Presentation (30 pts.): You will be required to facilitate a well-researched, detailed presentation on a topic of your own selection (a theatre practitioner, playwright, or theatre company NOT covered/discussed in class). This includes: 1) reading and relating scripts or other foundational materials/documents to the concepts at hand; 2) finding appropriate sources to share with the class; 4) sharing visual aids and leading the class discussion. This presentation must include web addresses and bibliographical material for sources utilized in preparing it so each of us may benefit later. Your research should utilize both primary and secondary resources. A primary source is anything that the artist created (including quotations from the artist). A secondary source is anything that someone else has written about the artist or their art. Avoid generalized internet sources such as *Encarta* and *Wikipedia* because the information therein is often inaccurate. **You should provide the class with a handout or study guide (uploaded to D2L prior to your presentation).** This handout must include web addresses and bibliographical material for sources utilized in preparing it.

Plan on actively engaging us for about **15-20 minutes**. Please plan all elements of your presentation carefully and offer it to the class in a formal, well-rehearsed manner. You will be graded on the content and construction of your material, your preparedness, your ability to knowledgeably respond to questions from the audience, and the professionalism exhibited in your formal presentation and as an audience member.

Options (this is far from an exhaustive list) for research presentations

THEATRE COMPANIES

- National Black Theatre
- Jubilee Theatre
- Billie Holiday Theatre Company
- Wooster Group
- Mabou Mines
- WOW Cafe Theatre
- Pan Asian Repertory Theatre
- Golden Thread
- Thalia Spanish Theatre
- Deaf West Theatre
- National Theatre of the Deaf
- Detour Company Theatre
- Identity Theater

- Semicolon Theatre Company
- The Kilroys
- New Native Theatre
- Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre
- Borderlands Theater
- Silk Road Rising
- Rasaka Theatre Company

WOMEN DESIGNERS

- Jean Rosenthal (lighting designer)
- Willa Kim (costume designer)
- Aline Bernstein (set/costume designer)
- Elisheba Ittoop (sound designer)
- Carolyn Mraz (set designer)

-Barbara Samuels (lighting designer)

PLAYWRIGHTS/PERFORMERS

-Ntozake Shange
-Tawfiq Al-Hakim
-Qui Nguyen
-Yussef El Guindi
-Zona Gale
-Vinnette Carroll
-Wakako Yamauchi
-Guillermo Gomez-Pena/Coco Fusco
-Rajiv Joseph
-Jose Torres-Tama (Taco Truck Theater)
-Lynn Nottage
-Paula Vogel
-Larry Kramer
-Mart Crowley
-Charles Busch
-Tony Kushner

-Sholom Asch

-Vera Starbard

-Sarah Kane

-Jeremy O. Harris

-Amiri Baraka (LeRoy Jones)

-Langston Hughes

-Adrienne Kennedy

-Suzan-Lori Parks

-Cherrie Moraga

-Kaite O'Reilly

PRODUCERS/DIRECTORS

-Hallie Flanagan

-Margo Jones

-Zelda Fichandler

-Nina Vance

-Ping Chong

-George C. Wolfe

-Jorge Huerta

Grading Breakdown:

The following grading scale will be used to determine all individual grades as well as the student's overall grade in the course:

Participation	10 pts.	100-90 =	A
Reflective Questions	30 pts.	89-80=	B
Article/Resource Pres.	10 pts.	79-70=	C
Reading Presentation	20 pts.	69-60=	D
Final Presentation	30 pts.	59 and below=	F
Total	100 pts.		

Please note: A grade of "A" will not be assigned to an individual who has not completed ALL outside of class assignments, regardless of average.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

Technical Support: If you are having technical difficulty with any part of D2L, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT
Contacting Me:

Please feel free to visit me during my virtual office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. Communicate, communicate, communicate! The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is **via email**. Please do not leave a message for me in the main department office.

Email Policy:

Before sending me an email with a general course-specific question, **review your syllabus/look at the handouts/check myLeo Online/ask a classmate first**. If your question has already been addressed in one of those places, then you will have the answer you need. If your question does not exist, please feel free to email me.

When emailing me: Please make your emails clear and concise, written with proper grammar in order to assure my earliest attention. In addition, please follow some common "email etiquette" procedures in order to keep our electronic communication effective and efficient. Specifically:

- Write a relevant subject line (e.g., "Alternative Canon question," or "THE 497 meeting request")
- Address me by name (ie: "Dear Professor Worley" or "Hi Becca" or just "Becca")
- Concisely state what it is you need. If it can't be communicated in a concise manner, perhaps request an appointment. **If requesting an appointment**, give me times that you are available **in the initial email!!!** My office hours are posted above.
- Use a "sign-off" ("Thank you" is always good) and **sign your name**.

Not following these guidelines potentially puts you at the bottom of my list for response time.

Student Resources:
Department of Theatre

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/mmct/default.asp>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
Course Specific Procedures:
Attendance Policy:

You may accumulate two (2) absences before any penalty occurs. **There are no additional absences allowed without penalty. Grades will be dropped in ½ letter grade increments for**

every class absences beyond the first two absences. While I will be flexible with technical difficulties, **plan accordingly.** Of course, if you have a prolonged illness or injury, or if a family emergency arises, speak with your instructor ASAP. **Communicate instances of illness or exposure to anyone with a communicable illness directly with your instructor ASAP. I will work to support you getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.**

Late Arrivals:

As with absences, I will be flexible with technical difficulties; however, all attempts to join our weekly meetings **on time** should be made. The class will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m.! If you are experiencing technical issues, please contact me so I know you are making all attempts to join class on time. Also, you are expected to stay in the meeting until you are dismissed from class. **Two late arrivals (within the ten-minute grace period) or early departures (or any combination of the two) may be counted as one absence in the class.**

Late Work:

Under normal circumstances, I do not accept late work.

Extra Credit:

The instructor reserves the right to offer extra-credit to all students, and to gauge its application appropriately and uniformly for all.

Incompletes:

Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (I or X) will NOT be given for a final grade in this course. Per University policy, students who **because of circumstances beyond their control** are unable to attend classes will, upon approval of their instructor, receive a mark of X (incomplete) in all courses in which they were **maintaining passing grades at the time of the request** for an incomplete.

University Specific Policies and Procedures:

Face-Coverings on Campus

A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement**Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill – 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Readings and assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below. All written assignments are due via email.

COURSE SCHEDULE IN PROGRESS (TBD)