San José State University
Theatre, Radio, Film TV
Contemporary Theatre TA 127 / ENG 127
Fall 2014

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Kirsten Brandt
Office Location: HGH 234
Telephone: TBA
Email: kirsten.brandt@sjsu.edu / kikibrandt@mac.com (this week only)
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursdays 3pm - 4pm in HGH 234
Class Days/Time: Tuesday and Thursday 4:30-5:45
Classroom: HGH 118

Prerequisites: Students must meet SJSU Studies GE Requirements:
Have upper division standing
Have completed the core GE requirements
Have passed the WST

Course Description

*European and American playwrights from 1950 to present and important theatre practices for this period.* This course explores contemporary theatre by critically examining selected plays and productions of the last fifty years. The course will concentrate on how the selected plays and productions express the diversity and complexity of postmodern society. The class will look at various performance styles and how they are a direct response and/or reaction to major changes in the social and political landscape. The course will focus on how theatre represents contemporary views of people, events and ideas through specific performance discourses.

Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

We will study theatre performances and texts as historical artifacts of their time and mirrors of their changing worlds but also as material for contemporary interpretation and production. You will learn systematic, analytical skills for assessing contemporary theatre – which can apply to other performance-based art forms such as television, film, dance and radio. The application of these skills will help students to more actively and articulately position them in relation to surrounding performance cultures. Finally, this course provides a method for understanding how the written script functions in relation to live theatre performance, basically how a play goes from page to stage.
GE/SJSU Studies Learning Objectives (LO)

LO 1. Compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, or attitudes of people from different societies or cultures;
LO 2. Identify the historical context of ideas and cultural practices and their dynamic relations to other historical contexts;
LO 3. Explain how culture changes in response to internal and external pressures.

Course Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO 1 Identify theatre artists who represent cultures from around the world.
CLO 2 Articulate how the various artists speak from both universal and individualistic viewpoints, and consider how the works affect audiences.
CLO 3 Recognize different forms, styles, and presentational modes of live performances in post-modern global society.
CLO 4 Research relationships between cultural artifacts (texts) and the economic, historical, political, and social aspects of contemporary society.
CLO 5 Articulate in academic writing how various forms of contemporary theatre communicate distinctive perceptions about the human condition, representing perceptions from differing viewpoints and cultures.

Required Texts/Readings

Required Texts/Readings
Hudes, Quiara Alegria  
*Water by the Spoonful* (ISBN 1559364386)
Kushner, Tony  
Nottage, Lynn  
*Ruined* (ISBN 155936355X)
Ruhl, Sarah  
*In the Next Room* (ISBN 1559363606)
Valdez, Luis  
*Zoot Suit* (ISBN 1559362320)

Additional readings, screenings, theatre performances, including:

Required Production
*Water by the Spoonful* by Quiara Alegria Hudes
August 20 – September 15 at Theatreworks (Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts)
You are responsible for reserving and purchasing your own tickets.
(Information at http://www.theatreworks.org/shows/1415-season/waterbythespoonful)

Recommended Productions
*Wuthering Heights* (workshop)  
Oct 3rd, 7pm Hal Todd Studio Theatre (HGH 103)
*Marat/Sade*  
Nov. 13,14,15,18 - 22, 7pm Hal Todd Studio Theatre (HGH 103)
*A Weekend with Pablo Picasso*  
Nov 12-Dec 5, San Jose Stage Company http://www.thestage.org/
*Storytelling Event*  
December 5th, 7pm University Theatre

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Assignments and Evaluation
**In-Class Activities (25% of grade)**
There will be short in-class writing assignments, discussion and activities in most class sessions. More than two unexcused absences will lower your in-class grade. *(Students are required to document excused absences for missing class or for late assignments.)* Please bring a notebook to class each session that is dedicate for in-class writing assignments and activities. This notebook will be collected randomly throughout the semester.

**Response Essays (25% of grade)**
Five 500-word essay responses on required plays will demonstrate your critical analysis to better understand the systematic method of dramaturgical analysis whereby play scripts can be better understood as representative artifacts of different cultures. *(Detailed guidelines will be reviewed in class.)*

**Due Dates:**
- Sept. 16 – *Water By the Spoonful* (5%)
- Sept. 30 – *Zoot Suit* (5%)
- Oct. 14 – *In The Next Room* (5%)
- Nov. 4 – *Ruined* (5%)
- Nov. 25 – *Angels in America* (5%)

**Research Paper (25% of grade)**
A 2000-2500 word research paper will give you an opportunity to find and explore relevant dramaturgy related to one play (of your choice in consultation with the instructor) from the contemporary theatre. Your paper is primarily a forum for examining wider cultural and historical realities that affect and are affected by the theatre. The paper research project is broken down into the following components:

- **Due Dates:**
  - Oct. 9 – Play chosen
  - Oct. 16 – Paper proposal (5%)
  - Nov. 6 – Bibliography and abstract (5%)
  - Dec. 4 – Completed paper (15%)
  *(Detailed guidelines will be reviewed in class)*

**Final Exam (25% of grade)**
Short answer and essay questions on course content related to GE Learning Objectives. You must provide a blue book.

*Students are strongly encouraged to take courses to satisfy GE Areas R, S, and V from departments other than their major department. Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co---registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.*

**Classroom Protocol**
- Be on time.
- No food or cell phones.
- Complete all assignments on time and by following directions
- Contribute to class discussions and in-class activities.
- No late or handwritten papers will be accepted.

Theatre, Radio, Film, TV, Animation/Illustration encourages student participation in department activities. However, if you are in a course or production activity that will present conflicts with your other courses and projects at any point in the semester, plan your time accordingly. This especially applies to your own production work or other student's productions. Be proactive: discover what those conflicts will be, contact your professors well in advance to discuss your options for staying current in ALL courses, especially if you are asked to miss a class meeting. No class and its requirements take precedence over another. Your participation in each course is required and valued by your faculty and classmates.

University Policies

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop Policy is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

- Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio recordings in this class. Video recording is not permitted. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material. Permission must be obtained in writing. In-class activities cannot be recorded without the permission of fellow students participating in the activity. Guest speakers will not be recorded without their permission.
- Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.
Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of their disability.

Accommodation to Students’ Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See University Policy S14-7 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit Peer Connections website at http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu for more information.
SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling.
## TA 127 Contemporary Theatre Fall 2014

### Course Schedule

*The schedule is subject to change with fair notice through e-mail and class announcement.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Introduction: What is Contemporary Theatre?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>The elements of theatrical performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>The Art of Dramaturgy. How to read a play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>The modern play. How did we get here? Looking at the history of contemporary theatre. <strong>READ: Water by The Spoonful</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Background on the modern play continued.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Dramaturgy: Water by The Spoonful. Impact of war on theatre.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Discussion: Water by the Spoonful <strong>RESPONSE ESSAY: Water by The Spoonful</strong> <strong>SEE: Water at Theatreworks (closed Sept 14)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Political Theatre, Bertolt Brecht and AgitProp</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino Dramaturgy: Zoot Suit and the Living Newspaper <strong>READ: Zoot Suit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>Discussion: Zoot Suit</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Discussion: Zoot Suit. Screening: Scenes from Zoot Suit <strong>RESPONSE ESSAY: Zoot Suit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Performance techniques of political and social theatre. San Francisco Mime Troupe. In-Class activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>Women in theatre and gender parity <strong>READ: In The Next Room</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Dramaturgy: In The Next Room <strong>DUE: Name of play for paper (consult with instructor)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Discussion: In the Next Room <strong>DUE: Paper proposal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Discussion: In the Next Room <strong>RESPONSE ESSAY: In The Next Room</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>Feminism and theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>Dramaturgy: <em>Ruined</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>READ:</strong> <em>Ruined</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct 28</td>
<td>Discussion: <em>Ruined</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Discussion: <em>Ruined</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 4</td>
<td>Documentary Theatre. Community involvement.&lt;br&gt;<em>The Seven.</em> <em>The Laramie Project.</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>RESPONSE ESSAY:</strong> <em>Ruined</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>In-Class activity: INTERVIEWS&lt;br&gt;DUE: Bibliography and abstract for paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Veterans Day – No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Queer Theatre&lt;br&gt;<strong>READ:</strong> <em>Angels in America Part I</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 18</td>
<td>Dramaturgy: <em>Angles in America.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Discussion: <em>Angles in America</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>READ:</strong> <em>Angels in America Part II</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nov 25</td>
<td>Screen: <em>Angles in America.</em>&lt;br&gt;<strong>RESPONSE ESSAY:</strong> <em>Angels in America Part I OR Part II</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Day – No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 2</td>
<td>Discussion: <em>Angles in America</em> and its legacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Where is Contemporary theatre headed? Projecting the future of the form.&lt;br&gt;DUE: <strong>RESEARCH PAPER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>Course Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Dec 18</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM</strong> 2:45pm – 5:00pm Bring a Blue Book.</td>
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