

Huron Brief Course Outlines

Fall/Winter 2023-2024

Course Title: Conflict in 20th Century Women's Drama

Course Number and Section

ENGLISH

4881F - 550

Instructor Name(s): Amanda Di Ponio

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

Considering the centrality of the notions of performativity and performance to Butler's theorization of subjection, as well as Lacan's definition of the "woman" position as a "not wholly there" in the domain of phallic control, this course is interested in exploring the ways in which various logics of conflict (family/intergenerational, war-related, environmental, class/gender/race-based, clinical, etc.) are represented in twentieth century and contemporary women's drama. We will consider what themes, linguistic conventions, affective states, and body language emerge consistently from the varied representations studied. How conflict intersects and reflects on changing social realities, alongside the ways in which conflict is re-imagined, redefined, and confronted in the work of twentieth-century and contemporary women's drama is our focus. Works by Lorraine Hansberry, Suzan-Lori Parks, Tara Beagan, Sarah Kane, Paula Vogel, and Young Jean Lee, among others, will be examined. In a world of ever-morphing and often volatile socio-political realities, the import of approaches to conflict that can sidestep the constraints of more traditional models of conflict resolution extends beyond the physical limits of the stage, reaffirming the value of theatre as a transformative social experience.

Learning Outcomes:

- Read/Analyze/View women's drama from a global, socio-cultural perspective, with an emphasis on theory, to understand the political, socio-cultural, moral, and philosophical substructures of the texts on the course
- Read/Analyze/Assess theoretical texts that will inform the reading of dramatic texts
- Communicate ideas effectively through journaling, in-class readings, discussion, presentations, and persuasive essays
- Deliver an analysis-driven seminar, in class, of a designated length
- Develop theoretical perspectives on the ways that women's drama uniquely informs and is informed by social and cultural discourses on sexuality, identity, and authority
- Research and engage with scholarly/critical texts
- Write logically and persuasively in fluent, standard English using the appropriate conventions for scholarly-critical writing
- Design strong thesis statements and structured arguments in persuasive essays

- Evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, including those obtained through the Internet
- Incorporate evidence, from primary, secondary, and critical theory texts in essay writing to support claims that logically and persuasively present complex and debatable arguments
- Apply principles of quotation integration using MLA documentation

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Tara Beagan, *In Spirit*. Playwrights Canada Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781770918061 (also available as an ebook through Playwrights Canada)

Rebecca Gilman, *Boy Gets Girl*. Faber and Faber, 2000. ISBN: 0571199836

Danai Gurira, *Eclipsed*. Theatre Communications Group, 2017. ISBN: 9781559365543

Lorraine Hansberry, *Les Blancs: The Collected Last Plays*. Vintage, 1994. ISBN: 9780679755326

Young Jean Lee, *Straight White Men*. Theatre Communications Group, 2021. ISBN: 9781559365031

Paula Vogel, *How I Learned to Drive*. Theatre Communications Group, 2018. ISBN: 9781559365642

Available online (as indicated); link also provided on the OWL course site:

Caryl Churchill, *Cloud Nine*. Methuen Drama, 1985.

<https://www-dramaonlinelibrary-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/playtext-detail?docid=do-9781408162934&tocid=do-9781408162934-div-00000098&actid=do-9781408162934-div-00000109>

Hannah Moscovitch, *Other People's Children* (2013)

<https://www-dramaonlinelibrary-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/playtext-detail?docid=do-9781770916296&tocid=do-9781770916296-div-00000010&actid=do-9781770916296-div-00000011> Suzan-Lori Parks, "The America Play." *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*. 6th ed., edited by W.B. Worthen. University of California Press, 2011, pp. 1529-1562 (available via OWL).

Obsidian Theatre – 21 Black Futures: <https://www.cbc.ca/artsprojects/21blackfutures> Djanet Sears, *Georgeena* (2020/1)

Lisa Codrington, *The Prescription* (2020/1)

Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Research Essay and Proposal (3,500-4,000 words)	12/04/2023	35%
Seminar Presentation and Outline	Various	25%
Reflection Journal (weekly)	Ongoing	20%
Critical Response Paper (1,000-1,500 words)	10/16/2023	10%
In-class Participation	Ongoing	10%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.