

Carnegie Theatre Co. – Department of Theatre Arts – Course Syllabus – 2023-2024

THEA 3/4 HONS: SPECIAL TOPICS: THEATRE HISTORY, LITERATURE, & CRITICISM

QuEeR THEATRE

Classroom: FA 102

Instructor: Mr. Savage

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Time: 5th Period

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description and Rationale:

Queer Theatre is an intensive chronological survey of 20th century English-language dramatic literature treating queer themes/subjects or written by queer playwrights.

The plays we will investigate are as diverse in reading experience as their writers: from Gertrude Stein to Paula Vogel, from Tennessee Williams to Terrence McNally. We will also cover examples from musical theatre.

Essays in queer theory and chapters from queer theatre histories will be considered along with the plays, illuminating historical contexts and theoretical frameworks.

Students will be challenged to arrive at definitions and valuations of "queer theatre" as an area of scholarly inquiry.

The class must also contend with how Queer Theatre can be seen as history and theory *in action*: building audiences while separating them, challenging the norm while endorsing it, celebrating difference while highlighting prejudice and pressure over the last 100 years.

Prerequisites: None.

Expected Class Composition: Carnegie students with varying backgrounds and interests in history, literature, art, or gender studies.

Course Texts, Materials, & Productions

Required Texts: *Provided*

- *Forbidden Acts: Pioneering Gay & Lesbian Plays of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Ben Hodges
- *Salome* by Oscar Wilde (Dover Thrift edition)
- *Suddenly Last Summer* by Tennessee Williams (acting edition)
- *Six Degrees of Separation* by John Guare
- *The Baltimore Waltz and Other Plays* by Paula Vogel
- *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches & Perestroika* by Tony Kushner
- *The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theatre Project
- *Boston Marriage* by David Mamet

Soundtracks: *La Cage aux Folles* (Herman 1983)

The Wild Party (LaChiusa 2000)

Required Materials: Designated Journal or Notebook (that can be turned in to instructor) Can be Digital.

Course Goals and Objectives - By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- formulate strong, evidenced, well-articulated arguments in both written and oral modes.
- read works of dramatic literature, theory, history and criticism with greater comprehension and recall.
- recognize theatre as a written, historically positioned, and “living” art form.
- generate and interrogate definitions of “queer” and “queer theatre.”
- identify the major figures and historical moments in the history of 20th and 21st century queer theatre as well as challenge such narratives and “canonizations.”
- apply a specific theoretical approach, queer theory, to dramatic texts (and beyond) and to see how the basic critical skills of such an application opens the door to applying other theoretical discourses in the future.
- evaluate the usefulness of “queer theatre” as a manufactured category of 20th and 21st century artistic production and reception with literary, cultural, economic, and political origins and ramifications.
- assess a text’s “queerness” in relationship to audiences, readers, and practitioners.
- employ the thinking of this course in explorations of current socio-political events involving “queerness” (*i.e.* gay marriage, AIDS as pandemic, or the Michael Jackson trial).

Queer Theatre: Grading and Course Requirements

THEATRE RULES:

1. **DON'T MISS YOUR CUE.**
-Be on time.
2. **KNOW YOUR LINES.**
-Complete your work.
3. **BRING YOUR PROPS.**
-Always have your supplies.
4. **NO UPSTAGING ALLOWED.**
-Be courteous and work together.
5. **KEEP UP THE ENERGY.**
-Be prepared to do your best.

Consequences

1. **MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR.**
---student/teacher conference
2. **CALL TO AGENT.**
---parent contact
3. **CONTACT PRODUCER.**
--disciplinary referral

Grading Policy:

Participation	20%
Process/Research Written Evaluations	40%
Performances / Projects	40%
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	100%

Late Policy: Everything in the theatre has a deadline. There are no excuses when the curtain rises. When an assignment is due, it is DUE. The (attendance) late policy is in your student handbook. If you are absent when a performance is scheduled, you will need to write an equivalent to the assignment.

Tardies: The school policy is printed in your student handbook on pages 14 and 15.

Cheating: As per our campus policy, plagiarized papers or projects will receive a grade of "0" (zero) -- no exceptions. Cheating or collusion will also result in a grade of "0" (zero) on a paper or project. This includes all papers & projects assigned, as well as any in-class or discussion activities assigned to students.

Attitude: Theatre is a collaborative art and requires that individuals work together and support each other. Theatre students will be working in groups and in pairs for many assignments so getting along with everyone is vitally important! A positive attitude plays a critical role in how much each student learns and in his/her contribution to the success of the entire class.

✂ COURSE REQUIREMENTS ✂

1. BASICS: Attendance and participation are vital for your success in this class as well as for the energy, excitement, and quality of the course as a whole.

a. Attendance - Please attend class daily. You are responsible for any work missed.

b. Participation - You receive 1 pt. for your participation at each class you attend.

This participation point is earned through your attention, enthusiasm for the subject, respect for your peers, interest in scholarly dialogue, preparedness for the class (including having appropriate materials with you and the readings completed), and, most importantly, your regular vocal contributions to class discussions.

**** As per the district curriculum requirements for this HONORS course, there is a required 40 hours of extracurricular involvement in department work expected for completion of the course. Options for completion of those hours will be discussed. ****

2. EXAMS: There are two exams for this course.

a. Mid-Term (Take-Home) - Students will receive this take-home exam two weeks before the due date. The exam is in two parts. First, students will craft short identifications for 20 out of 30 possible names/concepts/titles or quotes related to queer theatre. Second, students will respond to a specific prompt in a polished one page essay.

b. Final Comprehensive Exam - Students will take a final exam for this course, in our classroom, during finals week. The handwritten/"blue book" exam will include a objective identification section, matching section, as well as an essay (choice of 1 out of 2 prompts). The exam is comprehensive for the semester. Exam specifics and sample questions will be presented in-class at least two weeks prior to exam.

3. PROJECTS:

a. Preparation Journal - Students will use this journal to record reactions to assigned readings which may include notes, summaries, opinions, critiques, connections, and questions for discussion/debate. The expectation is that students will use journal entries as preparation for each class meeting and will refer to, and expand upon, their journal work during class meetings. Journals will be collected once a month by the instructor for review and response. The journal takes the place of reading quizzes and should prove an invaluable resource for exams, papers, and research.

b. Presentation (Play/Plawright in Context) - Each student will present on a play or playwright from our syllabus. Students will select their subject and presentation early in the semester. The goal of the presentation is to meaningfully situate the subject in a context (historical, dramaturgical or theoretical) and thereby propel the class into an engaging discussion. Presentations should last the entire BLOCK period (90 mins) and must be accompanied by a class hand-out for reference. (more →)

✠ COURSE REQUIREMENTS *(continued)*

The presentation should cover:

- a *brief* playwright biography and *socratic* summary of the play's plot and structure
- in-depth coverage of a minimum of two specific noteworthy events in the play's historical context, the play's production history, the play's critical reception, the play's connections to other literature, or from the author's development in the literary world and queer theatre history.
- personal reactions to the play/playwright
- one point of connection between subject and recent course texts and topics
- at least one provocative question for your classmates

Presentations can be creative, include audio/visual elements (as long as I am notified of your needs well in advance), or involve readings/performances from your play - but please try to keep to the time limit. Your goal is to demonstrate your growing ability to read, research, analyze, and theorize about this area of dramatic literature.

Key:† = in *Forbidden Acts*

@ = at the bookstore

☞ = handout (*instructor*)▼ **Queer Theatre** ▲

COURSE CALENDAR (subject to change)

Week(s)	Topics / Readings - <i>Prepare readings for the day they are listed.</i>
<p>1</p> <p>Getting Things "Straight"</p>	<p>Introductions, Syllabus, and Exploration of Core Terms</p> <p>☞ Jill Dolan: "Building a Theatrical Vernacular: Responsibility, Community, Ambivalence, & Queer Theatre" (2002) (p.1-8) from <i>The Queerest Art</i></p> <p>† Ben Hodges: "Introduction," <i>Forbidden Acts</i> (2003) (p.13-22)</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Turn of the Century</p>	<p>"The Love that Dare Not Speak Its Name" - Language Most Queer in Wilde & Stein</p> <p>@ Oscar Wilde: <i>Salome: A Tragedy in One Act</i> (1892/1894)</p> <p>☞ "The Disciple" (a poem in prose)</p> <p>"A Few Maxims for the Instruction of the Over-Educated"</p> <p>"Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young"</p> <p>Chronological table of Wilde's life</p> <p>☞ Gertrude Stein: from <i>Geography and Plays</i> (1922)</p> <p>- "The Works of Gertrude Stein" by Sherwood Anderson (p.5-8)</p> <p>- <i>Captain Walter Arnold: A Play</i> (p.260-261)</p> <p>- <i>Counting Her Dresses: A Play</i> (p.275-285)</p> <p>- <i>Bonne Annee: A Play</i> (p.302-303)</p> <p>☞ Catharine R. Stimpson: "<i>The Somagrams of Gertrude Stein</i>" (1985) from <i>L & G Reader</i> (p.642-52)</p>
<p>3</p> <p>"The Closet" Part I</p>	<p>Indecency, Abnormality, and Prisons - Asch and Bourdet</p> <p>† Preferatory material to <i>The God of Vengeance</i> (p. 27-33)</p> <p>† Sholom Asch: <i>The God of Vengeance</i> (1910/1922)</p> <p>☞ Kaier Curtin: Ch. 1 "The First Lesbian Character Ever Seen on an English Language Stage" (1987) from <i>Bulgarians</i> (p. 25-42)</p> <p>t Paula Vogel: <i>Indecent</i> (2015)</p> <p>† Edouard Bourdet: <i>The Captive</i> (1926)</p> <p>☞ Kaier Curtin: Ch. 2 "They Said it with Violets in 1926" (1987) from <i>Bulgarians</i> (p. 43-67)</p>

<p>4</p> <p>“The Closet” Part II</p>	<p>Rumors, Secrets, and Trials - Hellman and Wilde (again)</p> <p>Wrap-up <i>Vengeance</i> and <i>Captive</i>, transition into the 1930s</p> <p>† Lillian <u>Hellman</u>: <i>The Children’s Hour</i> (1934)</p> <p>† Leslie and Sewell <u>Stokes</u>: <i>Oscar Wilde</i> (1938)</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Coming Out & Coming Undone (Part I)</p>	<p>Temptation, Consumption, and the Exotic Erotic - Gide & Williams</p> <p>† Ruth & Augustus <u>Goetz</u> (after Gide): <i>The Immoralist</i> (1954) †</p> <p>☞ Jonathan <u>Dollimore</u>: “<i>Subjectivity and Transgression in Wilde and Gide</i>” (1988) from <i>L & G Reader</i> (p. 626-641)</p> <p>☞ Kaier <u>Curtin</u>: Ch. 16: “The First Drama in Any Language to Pit Homophobia Against Homophilia” (1987) from <i>Bulgarians</i> (p. 291-316)</p> <p>☞ André <u>Gide</u>: selection from <i>The Immoralist</i> (1902)</p> <p>@ Tennessee <u>Williams</u>: <i>Suddenly Last Summer</i> (1958) ** First Preparation Journal Collection/Check **</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Transitions</p>	<p>“Family” Secrets and Media</p> <p>Watch selection from film of <i>Suddenly Last Summer</i> Wrap-up Hellman, Stokes, Goetz, & Williams</p> <p>† Frank <u>Marcus</u>: <i>The Killing of Sister George</i> (1965)</p> <p>☞ Charles <u>Kaiser</u>: Ch. 3: <i>The Sixties</i> (p. 185-202) from <i>The Gay Metropolis: 1940-1996</i> ** Mid-Term assigned. **</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Transitions</p>	<p>“It’s my party . . .”</p> <p>† Mart <u>Crowley</u>: <i>The Boys in the Band</i> (1968)</p> <p>☞ William <u>Goldman</u>: Ch. 18 “Homosexuals” (233-240) from <i>The Season</i> (1969)</p> <p>☞ Stanley <u>Kauffman</u>: “Homosexual Drama and Its Disguises” <i>NY Times</i>, (1966) Discuss <i>Vagina Monologues</i></p> <p>Discussion on Stonewall: Raid, Riot, and Rebellion in 1969</p>

<p>8</p> <p>Coming Out & Coming Undone (Part II)</p>	<p>Confined Queers After Stonewall - Sherman and Puig</p> <p>† Martin <u>Sherman</u>: <i>Bent</i> (1978-9)</p> <p>☞ Selection from Manuel <u>Puig</u>/Allan <u>Baker</u>: <i>Kiss of the Spider Woman</i> (1985)</p> <p>Discuss <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i></p> <p>Mid-Term Discussion - Queer Theatre 1900-1980</p> <p>** Mid-Term Exam Due **</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Camp/ Drag</p>	<p>"I Am What I Am and What I Am is an Illusion . . ." - Herman and Fierstein</p> <p>@ Soundtrack, Jerry <u>Herman</u>: <i>La Cage aux Folles</i> (1983)</p> <p>☞ Selections from book of Fierstein <i>La Cage aux Folles</i> (1983)</p> <p>☞ Susan <u>Sontag</u>: "Notes on 'Camp'" (1964) in <i>Camp</i> (p. 53-65)</p> <p>☞ Jack <u>Babuscio</u>: "The Cinema of Camp (AKA Camp and the Gay Sensibility)" (1978) in <i>Camp</i> (p. 117-135)</p> <p>Watch selections from <i>La Cage / Birdcage / PBS Broadway Series</i></p> <p>** Term Paper Concept/Outline Due **</p> <p>** Second Preparation Journal Collection/Check **</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Let's Catch Up</p>
<p>11</p> <p>AIDS Drama Part I</p>	<p>Problems with Letting Go - Hoffman, Chesley, and McNally</p> <p>† William <u>Hoffman</u>: <i>As Is</i> (1985)</p> <p>** Grade report from Instructor **</p> <p>☞ Robert <u>Chesley</u>: <i>Jerker, or The Helping Hand . . .</i> (1986)</p> <p>☞ Terrence <u>McNally</u>: <i>Andre's Mother</i> (1988)</p> <p>☞ Simon <u>Watney</u>: "The Spectacle of AIDS" (1987) in <i>L & G Reader</i> (p.202-211)</p> <p>Terrence <u>McNally</u>: <i>Love! Valour! Compassion!</i>(1994)†</p>
<p>12</p> <p>AIDS Drama Part II</p>	<p>Prophets & Losses - Kushner</p> <p>☞ Tony <u>Kushner</u>: <i>Angels in America: Millennium Approaches</i> (1991-92)</p> <p>☞ Tony <u>Kushner</u>: <i>Angels in America: Perestroika</i> (1991-92)</p> <p>☞ David <u>Roman</u>: "November 1, 1992: AIDS/ <i>Angels in America</i>" (1998) in <i>Acts of Intervention</i> (p. 202-224)</p> <p>☞ Gary <u>Indiana</u>: <i>Roy Cohn</i> (1992) in <i>O Solo Homo</i> (p. 458-471)</p>

<p>13</p> <p>Life = Art</p>	<p>The Great (Inter)Net of Souls - Guare & Bornstein</p> <p>@ John <u>Guare</u>: <i>Six Degrees of Separation</i> (1990)</p> <p>☞ Jennifer <u>Gillan</u>: "Staging a Crisis in Masculinity: Race and Masculinity in <i>Six Degrees of Separation</i>" (2002) in Jenckes: <i>New Readings in American Drama</i> (p. 23-38)</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Life & Death Dreams</p>	<p>Queer Family Portraits - Bornstein and Vogel</p> <p>☞ Kate <u>Bornstein</u>: <i>Virtually Yours Version 2.0: A Game for Solo Performer with Audience</i> (1994)</p> <p>☞ Kate <u>Bornstein</u>: Ch. 14: "Queer Life/Queer Theatre" (pp. 146-166) in <i>Gender Outlaw</i> (1994)</p> <p>@ Paula <u>Vogel</u>: <i>The Baltimore Waltz</i> (1992)</p> <p>@ Paula <u>Vogel</u>: <i>And Baby Makes Seven</i> (1984-1993)</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Gay Panic & Hate Crimes</p>	<p>"We are like this." - Kaufman and Co.</p> <p>Wrap up Kushner, Guare, Bornstein and Vogel</p> <p>@ Moises <u>Kaufman & Tectonic</u> Theatre Project: <i>The Laramie Project</i> (1998-99)</p> <p>Watch selections from HBO film of <i>Laramie Project</i></p>
<p>16</p> <p>History as Future for Queer Theatre</p>	<p>Moving Forward, Looking Back - Mamet, Wolfe and LaChiusa</p> <p>@ David <u>Mamet</u>: <i>Boston Marriage</i> (2000)</p> <p>@ George C. <u>Wolfe</u> & Michael John <u>LaChiusa</u>: <i>The Wild Party</i> (2000)</p> <p>☞ Selections from the book of <i>The Wild Party</i></p> <p>☞ Selections from original poem by Joseph Moncure March (1928)</p> <p>Wrap-Up and Final Review Session</p>