

TA 145 1 Writing for Performance
Instructor: Diana Small
Spring 2021

Class Time
Location
Office Hours: By appointment

Before we dive in to the technical nature of a course syllabus, I want to express how honored I am to share space with you. Creating art is one of the greatest practices to our survival; it is thrilling, embarrassing, intimate, catalytic, generous and an excellent way to spend what time we are given. There are too many intersections between the collaborative nature of art making and the story of The Last Supper to contain in a paragraph. Thank you for sharing your personhood, known and unknown, with me and with your classmates. I desire to respect you on your artistic journey and I hope you will respect me and your classmates, too.

Course Description

This course satisfies two General Education Learning Outcomes: U.A. Common Inquiry: Reading Imaginative Literature. Students who take a course in "Writing for Performance" will (at the end of the course) have read and discussed 5 full length plays by contemporary U.S. theatre professionals and at least 8 new imaginative works by classmates. Students will have developed skills to discern tone, plot, comedy, tragedy, irony and character in the play form. Students will be skilled in reading and interpreting dialogue, distinguishing it from stage direction and the moments of silence in a drama. Students will distinguish the narrative structural scope of plays, whether that be the epic, living room drama, immersive, or an experimental form, understanding its historical context and imaginative impact. Students will build a library of plays and other experimental writings for performance by authors from a diversity of racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Students will be able to think critically about the authors' contexts and respond with empathic depth to the question, "What is the purpose of this work?"

Learning outcomes for 8- # @ k @ O .

Students will be able to comprehend and interpret imaginative works by grasping not only the narrative, themes and genre(s) a play expresses, but also how the play achieves that end; students will demonstrate the ability to read and interpret literature to support their own theatre making practice.

2. [Liberal Arts] Students will be able to comprehend and interpret imaginative works for performance grasping not only the narrative, themes and genre(s) a play expresses, but the play achieves that end; Students will be able to articulate and demonstrate how reading imaginative texts for performance enriches their liberal arts education and their particular vocational discernment process.

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Students who take a course in the "Writing for Performance" will (at the end of the course) have written weekly reflections on readings, weekly 1 page creative writing drills, and three larger pieces of creative work consisting of at least 25 pages that will be developed over the course of the semester. Students will distinguish the multitude of performance based writing genres that are possible including plays, solo shows, stand up comedy, speeches, rituals and hybrid performance based events. Students will build a catalogue of writing based exercises to strengthen their abilities to write for spoken word and time based events, having practiced writing exercises throughout the semester. Students will be able to articulate the value of revision, receiving and offering critique, and writing with close attention to grammar, syntax and page layout. Students will distinguish their particular writing style, voice and how to write in the voice of characters. Students will develop the ability to integrate their particular theological/existential questions with writing imaginatively for performance.

The specific student learning outcomes for 8- # o † @ are:

1. [Theatre Arts] Students will write creative work that demonstrates an awareness to narrative, character, dialogue, genre, theme, form and live performance, equipping them to contribute original works to the U.S. American theatre community.

2. [Liberal Arts] Students will write creative work that demonstrates an awareness to narrative, character, dialogue, genre, theme, form and live performance, equipping them to apply the course's writing practices to their particular vocational context.

By the end of this course you will have practiced...

Composing and developing your plays and other writings for performance from the angles of time, events, places, characters and major dramatic questions.

Writing poetically with an attention to spoken language and off the page interpretation.

Listening to your prophetic voice to create worlds and characters and thematic questions that are destined to emerge from you.

Responding to the work of other artists with intention, curiosity and courage.

Reading, watching and seeking out theatre and performance based arts of all sorts.

What Class Looks Like

This is a 3 hour course that meets weekly. We will balance the class time between sharing our original work, discussing assigned readings/videos/podcasts and collaborating on play making. Please come prepared with your Weekly Practice and Reflections (see below) printed so that we can dive in with vigor. We will rotate students sharing drafts of their larger projects the second half of the semester, but you are expected to begin working on them straight away. The week before you share, bring enough copies of your project for every student and the instructor to have a copy so we can make notes on it as we read it in preparation for the next week. If you post your project to Canvas by Tuesday at midnight, the instructor can have those copies made for you.

Readings to Acquire

Aditi Brennan Kapil (full length play)
Branden Jacob Jenkins (full length play)
Mfoniso Udofia (full length play)
Paula Vogel (full length play)
Judd Apatow (collection of interviews)
Daaimah Mubashshir (full length play)

Attendance

We meet once a week. - class counts. In this course, we are going to learn many fundamentals to narrative, character, plot and dialogue; every class really will support the learning for the next one. College Policy allows 2 excused absences. For every absence (excused or unexcused) beyond that, your final grade will be lowered 1/3 (ie: A to B+, C to C).

Office Hours

I am available to meet by appointment. Please email me and we will work out a time.

Projects and Grading

Weekly Practices 20%

These are creative writing exercises that will build muscle. These will never be more than 1 page. You will be assigned these weekly and expected to bring 2 printed copies to class (one for you to reference and one for the

alongside you). Imagine you have encountered something provocative and then you get to meet up with other artists and talk about it. That's our real lives happening every Wednesday! Bringing your reflection to class incorporates how participation & discussion factor into your grade.

Projects- 60%

Week 3– Worlds, Environment & Historical Moment

Read before class: @ o V Aditi Brennan Kapil

Reflection to bring to class: Excerpt and paragraph long reflection of @ o V

Practice to bring to class: 3 plays proposals for adaptations of canonical stories

Week 4– Inner Worlds and Imagination

Listen to before class: \ " M M u O O † 8 @

Listen to before class: u † O " U # h \ "

Reflection to bring to class: Excerpt and paragraph long reflection from either podcast.

Practice to bring to class: List poem of questions & images you have to God/the World/Yourself

Week 5– Action

Read before class: ° \ , Branden Jacob Jenkins

Reflection to bring to class: Excerpt and paragraph long reflection of ° \

Practice to bring to class: 4, unique A B A "microplays"

Example: Character A: The house is on fire.

Character B: I can't get pregnant.

Character A: Come meet your daughter.

Week 6– Action Round 2

Read before class: o , Mfoniso Udofia

Reflection to bring to class: Excerpt and paragraph long reflection from o

Practice to bring to class: 7 Cs for one of the play proposals from Week 3

Project(s) Proposal due today

Week 7– Time

Read before class: = @) Paula Vogel

Reflection to bring to class: Excerpt and paragraph long reflection on = @)

Practice to bring to class: 7 page play of the play proposal from Week 6

Week 8– Stand Up Comedy

Read before class: Pgs. 105-109 "The Short Happy Recent History of the Rape Joke," u U ° j , Rebecca Solnit

Read before class: "Rap on ce k * è A * è

Reflection to bring to c

Spring Break

Week 9– Stand Up Comedy Continued

Read before class: Select 2 interviews from [The Daily Show](#), Judd Apatow

Watch before class: [The Daily Show](#), Dulcé Sloan

Watch before class: [The Daily Show](#), Mike Birbiglia (Netflix)

Reflection to bring to class: Excerpt and paragraph long reflection from any video

Practice to bring to class: 1-3 minutes of stand up material

Week 10– Experimental Genres

Read before class: [The Daily Show](#), Daaimah Mubashshir

Reflection to bring to class: Excerpt and paragraph long reflection of [The Daily Show](#)

Practice to bring to class: Experimental re-telling of your spring break

Phone and Computer Policy

This is a device free class. It will help us focus and stay centered in our intention to think and write creatively. Please leave your phones on silent in your backpack. Please do not use your laptops in class. You will want to take notes and should bring a notebook and pen to make that possible.

Plagiarism Statement

To plagiarize is to present someone else's work—his or her words, line of thought, or organizational structure—as your own. This occurs when sources are not cited properly, or when permission is not obtained from the original author to use

by a vision of God's dream for God's people and all creation. The department affirms that all people are created in God's image, and works to uphold and encourage that sacred reality.

The fundamental subject of the theatre is Change. Change is impossible without action. Change comes as a consequence of willed, focused, motivated intent – of the spirit