THEATRE AND THE OTHER

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR IN MARGINALIZED THEATRE – SEMN 123-01 FALL 2018

Professor: “C” Heaps (Dr. “C”)

Contact: Phone - 337-7126; E-mail - c.heaps@kzoo.edu

Class Location: Dewing 114

Class Time: MWF 11:55am-1:10pm

Office Location: Theatre Office, Light Fine Arts Basement

Office Hours: MWF 3-5pm, TR 2-4, or by appointment (subject to change, I’ll let you know)

Peer Leaders: Kyong.So15@kzoo.edu & Natalie.Markech17@kzoo.edu

**What is this course?**

There are two major purposes of this course. One is to study issues of race, gender, and class in society through works written by marginalized peoples in America and beyond. We will be looking at a variety of theatre, including feminist, African-American, Latinx, Asian-American, Arab-American, Indigenous American, and LGBTQ theatre. A basic assumption of the course is that theatre and drama in the Americas reflects the plurality of culture in the Western Hemisphere and that the plays reflect the values of the society.

**What will you be able to do by the end of this course?**

 After completing this course, the student should be able to:

* demonstrate increased skill in reading, analysis, and thoughtful response to drama as a unique form of literature with a set of specific criteria.
* demonstrate increased skill in critical writing and composition as well as effectively communicating more personal responses.
* achieve a greater understanding of culture and trends in history, politics, and social thought through the interpretation of drama.
* achieve a greater awareness of issues of race, gender, and class in culture.

**What is a first-year seminar?**

First-year seminars are designed to introduce you to the college experience and guide you in learning what is expected from you. As such, the seminars are made up of three components that unify them despite their differing content:

* Writing Competencies
* Beyond Google: College Research Workshop
* First Year Forums

**WRITING COMPETENCIES**

The First-Year Seminar faculty has established the following goals for fostering writing competencies that will help prepare students for writing in discipline-specific courses in the major and, eventually, for writing the SIP. We hope that every first-year student will develop greater competency in these areas:

**Achieving clarity through revision**

* stating and developing a thesis
* writing coherent sentences and well-developed paragraphs
* using correct grammar and mechanics
* being conscious of overall structure and impact
* becoming proficient at editing and proof reading
* writing frequently to gain fluency
* expressing ideas directly and economically

**Constructing an argument using evidence**

* understanding the difference between opinion, argument, and evidence, and becoming aware of which of the three serves the writing project at hand
* synthesizing others’ ideas with one’s own
* using sources to support ideas and positions
* using quoted materials effectively and correctly

**Gaining experience in research strategies**

* understanding why doing research is important
* learning how to do research, beginning with the earliest stages
* putting newly gained knowledge and skills into practice
* working as independent scholars and contributing to scholarly discourse throughout college and beyond

**Cultivating an authentic and versatile style of written communication**

* discovering one’s own way into material
* making deliberate choices about structure, style, and voice, with a distinct awareness of audience, context and impact
* writing in a natural, straightforward style
* demonstrating or developing authenticity and ownership of the work

**BEYOND GOOGLE: COLLEGE RESEARCH WORKSHOP**

Our Seminar will participate in a workshop intended to help you develop and improve your research skills that enhance your development as an independent scholar.  Your work will be part of a focused class project.

**FIRST-YEAR FORUMS**

First-Year Forums are intended to help entering K students continue their academic and personal growth. They are interactive, intentionally developmental, focused on learning, and built on aspects of the K-Plan. The Forums fall into five groups:

* Group 1:  **Social Justice and Civic Engagement**
* Group 2:  **Intercultural Understanding**
* Group 3:  **Personal Decision-Making and Habits**
* Group 4:  **Career and Professional Development**
* Group 5: **Independent Scholarship and Academic Success**

All first-year students are required to attend one Forum in each group. Many attend more. If students attend fewer than five, two percentage points for each Forum missed will be deducted from the final Seminar grade.

**\*NOTE:** Student questions about attendance should be directed to Assistant to the Dean of Students Ms. Sally Arent (sarent@kzoo.edu). If you have any questions, please ask. Students can check their attendance records at <https://campus.kzoo.edu/fye/showcredits.php>

**What texts are required for this course?**

Available at the college bookstore:

Hwang, David Henry. *M. Butterfly*

Moraga, Cherrie L. *Hungry Woman*

Clements, Marie. *Burning Vision*

Kushner, Tony. *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*

Also, you will need a Reader Pro subscription with New Play Exchange (newplayexchange.org). This is a $12 subscription that lasts for one year.

Other short readings may be made available online. They will always be added with at least a week notice before we discuss them.

**How will you be graded in this course?**

Evaluation will be determined by:

15% - Participation

40% - Structured Reflection (Play Responses)

15% - Midterm essay (First Version and Revision)

10% - The “Beyond Comfort Zone” Project

20% - Research/Revision/Final Essay

\*Attendance, in class, at (at least) five First-Year Forums, and any other required events.

**GRADE %**

A+ 97%

A 94%

A- 90%

B+ 87%

B 84%

B- 80%

C+ 77%

C 74%

C- 70%

D+ 67%

D 64%

D- 60%

F Below 60%

**What will we be doing in class?**

This is a seminar, not a lecture course. I will lecture only occasionally.

Instead our average week will look something like this:

Monday – Lectures, discussions, and workshops on writing

Wednesday – Discussing (as a class) a published play from the marginalized group we are looking at that week. This means the published plays we read are due by class on Wednesday.

Friday – Discussing plays chosen from New Play Exchange in small groups. You will select the play you read individually based on criteria I give you.

When structured reflections are assigned, they will be due Saturday night by 10pm (electronically via Moodle). These are 2-3 page essays reflecting on the works we read and your response to them. You will receive a handout with more details.

Details on the midterm and final essays will be forthcoming. There will be an in-class peer review of the first version of the midterm essay.

**What should I bring to class?**

Do bring:

 Whatever work we are discussing in class. Electronic copies are acceptable for New Play

 Exchange plays

 Whatever method you have for taking notes

 Yourself, actively engaged

Do NOT bring:

 Food or drink (water bottles excepted)

 Homework from other classes

 Disrespect for anybody present

**What about electronics?**

I love electronic devices. You probably do too. I'm going to assume you can act as adults and responsibly use (or not use as the case may be) your laptops. Please turn off your cell phones. But know, if you use the technology to check your e-mail, stalk Facebook, or any other similar activity, you're primarily hurting yourself. Theatre is a live event; be grateful for the chance to have face-to-face time with fellow human beings. Being in your seat does not guarantee your presence, and we want you here! Also, if you are continually being too much of a disruption to the class, this privilege will be taken away.

**What about live theatre?**

Since plays are meant to be experienced in live performance, you are required to see Kalamazoo College’s production of ***It Can’t Happen Here***. You will see it during **Week 8, Nov 1-4 @7:30pm** in the Nelda K. Balch Playhouse.

#### What rubric do I use for grading essays?

*An “F” essay has several of the following characteristics:*

-you didn’t do it

-you submitted it so late you can’t earn credit

-academic dishonesty identified

*A “D” essay has several of the following characteristics:*

-unclear or non-existent thesis

-very poor organization, e.g., unclear paragraph topic sentences

-serious problems in sentence structure or grammar making clarity an issue

-many repeated mechanical errors (spelling, typos, etc.)

-ignoring or not completing directions of assignment

-very little critical analysis &ideas, e.g., mostly description of plot

-no use of supporting evidence from text

-no transitions

*A "C" essay has several of the following characteristics:*

-underdeveloped ideas

-some mechanical errors (spelling, typos, etc.)

-some problems in sentence structure or grammar

-too-general or "surface" exploration of topic

-too-general thesis

-too-general or weak topic sentences

-too-general or uninteresting intro and conclusion

-inappropriate or uninteresting word choices

-weak use of examples

-weak transitions

-does not use the criticism on the plays (on Closed Reserve)

*A "B" essay has several of the following characteristics:*

-good, but not absolutely thorough development of ideas

-a few mechanical errors

-perhaps a few minor sentence structure or grammar problems

-no clarity problems

-serious exploration of topic that that doe *not* go beyond "safe " territory or does *not* make surprising or original

 connections

-solid, clear thesis supported by rest of paper

-no major organizational problems

-consistent argument with solid use of evidence/examples from the text and some from criticism

-solid intro and conclusion

-mostly smooth transitions, perhaps some abrupt transitions

-use of criticism, introductory essay material in anthology, or other outside sources

*An "A" essay has the following characteristics:*

-one or two mechanical errors maximum

-no serious grammar or sentence structure problems

-no clarity problems, expression of ideas is accurate and lucid

-serious exploration of topic that goes beyond too-general ideas and safe territory; instead, recombining ideas in a way that makes surprising and fresh connections, perhaps from previous readings, criticism, performance events, previous discussions, etc.

-interesting and provocative thesis. All points in the essay elaborate this thesis

-smooth transitions from paragraph to paragraph and within paragraphs

-consistent argument with often easily overlooked examples from the text or perhaps points not made in class. Uses the criticism thoroughly and goes beyond it.

-an attention-grabbing intro that leads to the thesis and a conclusion that poses a new way of looking at the material

**Alphabet Soup of Policy**

**Attendance**

Attendance is absolutely essential to this course. Students are allowed TWO absences because life happens, but otherwise, people need to be in class, engaged, on time. **You must never be late or miss a class in order to be considered for the full amount of the participation grade component.** Exemptions may be granted for hospitalization, deaths in the family, etc., at my discretion.

**Honor Code and Academic Honesty**

This course operates under the **College Honor System**. That means: we treat each other with respect, we nurture independent thought, we take responsibility for personal behavior, and we accept environmental responsibility. **Academic honesty** is a critical part of our value system at K. When you borrow an idea, express the idea in your own words, thus thinking it through and making it your own, and acknowledge the source of the idea with the proper citation and reference, or, in certain situations, use the exact words of the source in quotation marks and acknowledge it with the proper citation, page number, and reference. Ideas raised in class are part of the public domain and, therefore, sources of the ideas need not be acknowledged. If you are ever in doubt about this, you must ask. For the full policy, see <https://reason.kzoo.edu/studev/policies/dishonest/>.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a score of zero points on the assignment, further disciplinary action from the Dean’s Office, and possible course failure. **No exceptions.** Be sure you are presenting your own work.

**Disabilities Accommodation**

If you are a student with a disability who seeks accommodation or other assistance in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. Kalamazoo College is committed to making every effort to providing reasonable accommodations. If you want to discuss your overall needs for accommodation at the College, please direct questions to the Associate Dean of Students Office, (269) 337-7209. For more information, please see <https://www.kzoo.edu/student-life/students-with-disabilities>/.

**Learning Commons**

The Learning Commons is a network of peer support available to help you with a variety of skills and disciplines. The Writing Center, Research Consultant Center, and Center for New Media Design are on the first floor of Upjohn Library. Our English as a Second Language and Learning Specialist support programs are located there as well. The Math-Physics Center is in Olds Upton Hall. It is my observation that students who frequent these centers generally learn more and receive higher grades, so I encourage you to use them early and often. You can find more information about each of these centers here: <https://reason.kzoo.edu/learningcommons/>.

Please go visit the Writing Center at least once in the first two weeks of the course.

**Late Work**

All assignments are due in class on the date specified. Late work will be graded down one full grade for each day, including the day it’s due. I am willing to negotiate extensions, but please do so in advance. NO extensions for the final essay.

**Communication**

I will communicate with the class via e-mail or Moodle announcements. I will answer your questions as soon as I can, but I may not check e-mails late at night or on the weekend.

**Sensitive or Controversial Content**

*Some of the plays we will read contain content that some may consider controversial.* If at any time you truly find such material so offensive that you cannot participate in discussion or complete an assignment, please let me know. If you like, you may tell me by note or email. Please communicate with me if you are experiencing any problems in the course.

**Weekly Breakdown**

**Orientation Week – Who are we and why are we here?**

* What does classroom discussion look like?
* How does a play differ from other literary formats?
* What is New Play Exchange and how do I use it?
* READING: The syllabus for Friday

**Week 1 – Modeling Play Discussion and Research**

* What is a structured reflection?
* How do I analyze a play?
* What tools do I have available to do research?
* What can I learn about the African-American experience from *Dutchman*?
* READING: *Dutchman* by Amiri Baraka (Moodle)
* ASSIGNMENT: Structured Reflection on *Dutchman*

**Week 2 – Indigenous Theatre**

* What criteria do I use to decide what media I consume?
* What are some of the challenges that indigenous people face in the Americas?
* How can I understand complex plays like *Burning Vision*?
* READING: *Burning Vision* by Marie Clements
* READING: NPX – American Indian or Alaskan Native (comedy or political)
* ASSIGNMENT: Structured Reflection

**Week 3 – Feminist Theatre**

* What is the value of translation in theatre?
* In what areas do women face marginalization?
* What is traditional structure?
* READING: *Refusing the Flower* by Lucienne Guedes Fahrer (translated by “C” Heaps) (NPX or Moodle)
* READING: NPX – Female Gender Identity (faith-based or science fiction) feminist keywords
* ASSIGNMENT: Structured Reflection

**Week 4 – LGBTQ Theatre**

* What are the consequences of marginalization?
* How does our knowledge of history interact with our capacity to analyze works?
* In what ways do marginalized groups interact with each other?
* READING: *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner
* READING: NPX – LGBTQ Sexual Identity (mystery/thriller or horror)
* ASSIGNMENT: Structured Reflection
* ASSIGNMENT: Midterm Essay -first version due in class next Monday

**Week 5 – Writing and Evaluation**

* How can I help my fellow students write better?
* How do I influence my own research and, conversely…
* How does my research influence who I am?
* ASSIGNMENT: Midterm Essay – First Version, due Monday by 11am (bring a hard copy to class, as well)
* ASSIGNMENT: Peer evaluations in class Monday

Wednesday there will be no class. Instead, you must visit with me during my office hours this week to individually go over your essays. Wednesday’s class period will be added to my office hours. Those who make appointments get precedence on time slots.

**Week 6 – Asian-American Theatre**

* What is the difference between work that becomes mainstream and that which remains marginalized?
* How does the theatrical selection process effect playwrights from marginalized groups?
* What causes a playwright to write what they do?
* READING: *M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang
* READING: NPX – Asian or Asian-American (biography or movement/physical)
* ASSIGNMENT: Midterm Revision due Monday at 11am (bring a hard copy to class, as well)
* ASSIGNMENT: Structured Reflection

**Week 7 – Arab American Theatre**

* What added burdens do villainization add to marginalization?
* How can a playwright write about political topics without being overtly political?
* What considerations does a playwright take into account when writing a play?
* READING: *Food and Fadwa* by Lameece Isaaq and Jacob Kader (Moodle)
* READING: NPX – Middle Eastern or Arab American (fable/folktale)
* ASSIGNMENT: Structured Reflection
* ASSIGNMENT: Final Essay Thesis Due Friday at 11am

**Week 8 – Latinx Theatre**

* Why Latinx?
* How does having multiple languages in a play affect its reception?
* How do you prepare to see a play?
* READING: *Hungry Woman* by Cherrie Moraga
* READING: NPX – Latinx (romantic comedy or dark comedy)
* ASSIGNMENT: Structured Reflection
* ASSIGNMENT: Final Essay Research Prospectus Due Friday at 11am
* ASSIGNMENT: Watch the performance of *It Can’t Happen Here*

**Week 9 – African American Theatre**

* What have you learned about the margins in this course?
* How have you grown over the course of the term?
* How can you support non-mainstream theatre?
* READING: NPX – Black or African American (experimental or tragedy) – This discussion will take place on Wednesday this week.
* ASSIGNMENT: Structured Reflection
* ASSIGNMENT: Final Essay Thesis and Outline Due Friday at 11am

We will have our Beyond Google Workshop in the library this week. Meet in ULC 118 on Friday, instead of in our normal location.

**Week 10 – Beyond Comfort Zone**

* What did you learn from the Beyond Google workshop?
* How will it affect your final paper?
* How would you approach a college course differently now starting day 1?
* ASSIGNMENT: Beyond Comfort Zone Project Essay Due Monday at 9pm

Meet with me in a 20-minute appointment by Wednesday night to discuss your Beyond essay and your experience with the workshop and this class.

There will be no class Wednesday to allow time for these appointments.

There will be no class Friday as I will be at the American Society for Theatre Research conference.

**Finals**

**\*We will NOT meet during the official final exam time for this course but your deadline for submitting the Final Essay is Exam Week Tuesday Nov. 21 at 5PM**