

Dr. Ariel Nereson  
[anereson@buffalo.edu](mailto:anereson@buffalo.edu)  
Office: Alumni Arena 192  
Office Phone: 645-0573  
Office Hours: by appt only

TH415/515, 3 credits  
University at Buffalo – SUNY  
Fall 2021  
M/W 10:50-12:10  
In person, Baldy 117

### Course Description

This course will build on students' knowledge of historical, theoretical, and practical elements of dramaturgy in the dramatic theater. The "advanced" nature of the course is found in our collaborative investigation of how dramaturgical skills (particularly curation and script analysis) might be applied to current trends in performance: dance, musical theater, and the digital world. We will focus on new understandings of the dramaturg as a creative artist their own right and on emerging concepts of the dramaturg's role in various kinds of performance production, especially the responsibility of public engagement with the communities we serve as artists.

### Required Materials

[The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy, ed. Magda Romanska](#)

[Fun Home by Lisa Kron, Jeanine Tesori, and Alison Bechdel](#)

Recommended because of fantasticness: [Fun Home, graphic novel by Alison Bechdel](#)

You must also have access to UBLearn; additional readings will be posted on our course page. Please bring all texts with you to class on the assigned dates. While anything posted on UBLearn will obviously be a digital text, if you are screened out and/or would prefer hard copy, I have hyperlinked to the hard copies of texts we will be reading quite a bit of in the Course Calendar.

### Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:	Demonstrated through:
Develop the skills necessary to conduct dramaturgical research in professional and academic performance environments, including analysis of text and movement.	Class participation, script analysis assignments, preparation of midterm and final projects (details will be shared in class).
Apply research skills to self-directed dramaturgical investigations.	Midterm and final projects (details will be shared in class).
Become acquainted with the history and practice of dramaturgy in multiple performance genres.	Class participation, completion of class readings (details will be shared in class).

<p>Gain practice synthesizing and discussing ideas, historical context, and interpretations of performance texts in forms suitable for presentation to theatrical collaborators in professional situations.</p>	<p>Ongoing evaluation of class participation including creation of class discussion questions and production information, script analysis assignments.</p>
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### **Methods of Assessment**

Participation – 20% (200 points)

Rubric to be devised by the class.

Dramaturgy Toolkits for Analysis – 30%, 3 at 10% each (100 points each)

Students will practice the following tools for script analysis: 1) Fuchs's "Play as a Planet" (1 play), 2) Ball's "triggers and heaps" (1 play), 3) Orr's "bead diagram" (1 scene). Students may choose any play they encounter this semester for any of these approaches. Your analysis is due at the top of class on the day we finish any given play. Analyses will be graded pass/fail (scale of 100/50), with the opportunity to revise up to a pass at any time in the semester. Further details will be given in class.

Midterm – 20% (200 points)

Students will develop a season proposal to a theater of their choosing of one "classic" play (i.e., Restoration or earlier) AND one "new American" play (written within the last ten years, and with the understanding that "American" crosses many borders, geographic and otherwise). Midterms will be graded pass/fail (scale of 100/50), with the opportunity to revise up to a pass at any time in the semester. Further details will be given in class.

Final – 30% (300 points)

The final will be a dramaturgy casebook including a full script analysis for one play. Students will choose their plays in consultation with the instructor. Further details will be given in class.

You will be given points for your assignments representing your absolute performance (i.e., not relative to other students' performance). Any uncompleted assignment earns a 0. Your final grade will be calculated as follows: A = 940-1000, A- = 900-939, B+ = 870-899, B = 840-869, B- = 800-839, C+ = 770-799, C = 740-769, C- = 700-739, D = 600-699, F = below 600.

### **Course, Departmental, and Institutional Policies**

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Plagiarism is unacceptable. Do not sell yourself short by pirating someone else's ideas: do the work yourself, be brave, and share it. This does not mean we are not inspired by others' work, nor does it mean we should not acknowledge where others have influenced us or can

support our ideas. This is done through proper citation not just of scholarly work, but also of creative work. You MUST cite anything that does not originate with you. Pick a style – MLA, APA, or Chicago – and stick to it. Please see me with any questions about plagiarism and citation BEFORE you turn your work in. If you plagiarize, you will fail the assignment. No exceptions. Be aware that any and all work you turn in may be scanned through plagiarism detection software at my discretion.

*UB Official Academic Integrity Policy:* Academic integrity is a fundamental university value. Through the honest completion of academic work, students sustain the integrity of the university while facilitating the university's imperative for the transmission of knowledge and culture based upon the generation of new and innovative ideas. For the complete policy please visit: <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml>

#### ACCESSIBILITY

I am committed to the academic success of all students in this course. If you have a disability of any kind that will affect your participation in this course, please let me know so that accommodations can be arranged in advance. University resources are available at <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/>.

#### ATTENDANCE

- Students are allowed two unexcused absences for whatever reason.
- When possible, notify me in advance of your inability to participate in class.
- If you are well enough to participate remotely, contact me for possible accommodations.
- If you are sick or have any symptoms of illness, you are expected to *remain home* and inform me by email as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after missing class.
- At that time, you are also expected to make arrangements to complete missed work.
- If you miss more than 2 classes (for illness or a university approved absence) *without making arrangements to make up the work*, your grade will drop 1/3 grade for each absence.

#### CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

We are committed to cultivating an inclusive learning environment devoted to dialogue across intellectual and cultural differences. The study of theatre and dance routinely involves sensitive and challenging material, and although we do not know all the complexities that individuals bring to the classroom, studio, or rehearsal space, we remain committed to making those spaces supportive, collaborative, and inclusive. In order to achieve this, students and faculty alike are expected to engage with class materials and each other with respect and professionalism.

Coursework in theatre and dance is also a physical endeavor, and we hold to a standard of affirmative consent for physical contact. Students may withhold or withdraw consent for

physical touch at any time, and at no point should any student submit to unwanted touch or physical engagement from peers or faculty.

Students are encouraged to bring issues of harassment, exclusion, or discrimination to the attention of the instructor, a faculty member with whom they feel comfortable, or the department chair. In addition, UB's office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) exists to ensure that issues of harassment, discrimination, and accommodation are addressed in a timely and effective manner, and to foster and sustain a working and learning environment where each member of the community can succeed. If you experience harassment, discrimination, or a lack of accommodation, you are encouraged to speak with EDI confidentially, with no threat of retaliation: <http://www.buffalo.edu/equity.html>

Netiquette sidebar: my goal is that our class will be a warm and welcoming space, yet it is also a professional space. Please review the following if you need to brush-up on communicating with your professor:

<http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html>

#### HEATH AND SAFETY RE: COVID IN FALL 2021

In accordance with UB official policies, all participants (students and faculty) **must** be masked when indoors in any UB building (with the exception of on-campus dining facilities, when eating, and your personal living spaces). This means that during our class time, nobody will be eating. Please plan accordingly. It is extremely important that each participant completes their daily health attestation form and I will check these occasionally. Lastly, if you are not feeling well, **STAY HOME**. Our community, including members who are immunocompromised, and who live with and care for high-risk individuals, including children too young to be vaccinated, are depending on you to behave responsibly.

#### INJURY-INCIDENT REPORT POLICY

In the event of injury, an incident report should be filed immediately. To file an incident report, contact campus police at 716-645-2222.

#### CRITICAL CAMPUS RESOURCES

##### Sexual Violence

UB is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking. If you have experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), UB has resources to help. This includes academic accommodations, health and counseling services, housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and assistance with reporting the incident to police or other UB officials if you so choose. Please contact UB's Title IX Coordinator at 716-645-2266 for more information. For confidential assistance, you may also contact a Crisis Services Campus Advocate at 716-796-4399.

## Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. These might include strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, health concerns, or unwanted sexual experiences. Counseling, Health Services, and Health Promotion are here to help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn more about these programs and services by contacting:

Counseling Services: 120 Richmond Quad (North Campus), 716-645-2720, or 202 Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-5800. Health Services: Michael Hall (South Campus), 716-829-3316. Health Promotion: 114 Student Union (North Campus), 716-645-2837.

## Basic Needs Insecurity

If you are experiencing food insecurity, UB has a variety of services available to assist you with food access. Please visit the following for details:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/help/emergency/food-support.html>

If you are experiencing housing insecurity, UB's Emergency Fund may be able to assist you. Please visit the following for details:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/help/emergency/emergency-funds.html>

## Course Calendar

\*subject to change at instructor's discretion\*  
reading is due on the day assigned

RC – Routledge Companion

All \* readings available through UBlearns unless otherwise indicated

WEEK ONE: Introduction to Dramaturgy

M 8/30:

Intro day, syllabus review

W 9/1:

Read: 1. \*Leonard Katz, "The Compleat Dramaturg," 2. \*Michael Chemers, "Intro: What the #\$%@ is a Dramaturg?", 3. \*Geoffrey Proehl, Foreword to *Dramaturgy in the Making*

WEEK TWO: Dramaturgy Practices

M 9/6: **No class – Labor Day**

W 9/8:

Read: 1. Lawrence Switzky, "Dramaturgy as Skill, Function, and Verb" (RC), 2. Elinor Fuchs, "EF's Visit to a Small Planet" (RC)

WEEK THREE: Classical Theater and Tools of Script Analysis

M 9/13:

Read: 1.\*Robert [Fagles translation of Sophocles' Antigone](#), pgs. TBD, including Introductory material, 2. \*Elizabeth Bell, "Aristotelian Drama," 3. \*David Ball, "Backwards and Forwards," excerpts

W 9/15:

Read: 1. \*Fagles translation of Sophocles' Antigone, pgs. TBD, 2. \*Katalin Trencsenyi, "Institutional Dramaturgy: The Beginnings," 3. \*Michael Chemers, "Script Analysis"

WEEK FOUR: Translation, Revision, and Adaptation in Classical Theater

M 9/20:

Bring the Fagles Antigone to class

Read: 1. Shelley Orr, "The Bead Diagram" (RC), 2. Katalin Trencsenyi, "A view from the bridge" (RC)

W 9/22:

Read: 1. \*Griselda Gambaro, *Antigona Furiosa*, 2. \*Elizabeth Bell, "Brechtian Drama," 3. \*Bertolt Brecht, "Epic Theatre," 4. Toni Haring-Smith, "Dramaturging non-realism" (RC)

WEEK FIVE: Translation et. al, cont'd

M 9/27:

Read: 1. \*Athol Fugard, *The Island*, 2. Katalin Trencsenyi, "Production Dramaturgy," excerpts, 3. \*Michael Chemers, "Why This Play Now?"

W 9/29 – class meets via Zoom

Zoom with Carla Steen, Resident Dramaturg at the Guthrie Theater

Read: 1. \*Guthrie A Midsummer Night's Dream Play Guide

WEEK SIX: Case Study on Indigenous/Native Dramaturgies

M 10/4: Zoom with Dr. Christiana Molldrem Harkulich, Dramaturg and Professor at Eastern Illinois University

Read: 1. \*[Drew Hayden Taylor, Berlin Blues](#), pgs. TBD, 2. \*Native Humor reading TBD

W 10/6:

Read: 1. \*Drew Hayden Taylor, *Berlin Blues*, pgs. TBD, 2. Edward Sobel, "Season planning" (RC), 3. Vicki Stroich, "On dramaturgy and leadership" (RC)

WEEK SEVEN: Case Study: Spanish Golden Age Theater

M 10/11:

Read: 1. \*\*"House of Desires readings," 2. \*[Catherine Boyle translation of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's House of Desires](#), Acts 1 and 2, 3. RSC season write-up

W 10/13:

Read: 1. *House of Desires*, Act 3, 2. Adam Versényi, "The dissemination of theatrical translation" (RC), 3. \*Julie Greer Johnson, "Sor Juana's Castaño"

WEEK EIGHT: Midterm and Start Musical Theater Unit

M 10/18: **Midterms due, no class**

W 10/20: Zoom with Dr. Ken Cerniglia, Dramaturg for Disney Theatrical Group and *Hadestown*

Read: 1. Ken Cerniglia, "Dramaturgical leadership and the politics of appeal" (RC)

WEEK NINE: MT Unit, cont'd.

M 10/25:

Read and listen: 1. *Fun Home* pgs. TBD, 2. \*Joseph Cermatori, "Music Planet"

W 10/27:

Read and listen: 1. *Fun Home* pgs. TBD, 2. Brian Valencia, "A method for musical theatre dramaturgy" (RC), 3. Miriam Weisfield, "Framing the theatrical experience (RC)

WEEK TEN: MT Unit, Cont'd.

M 11/1:

Read: 1. Jane Barnette, "Literary Adaptation" (RC), 2. \*Rebecca Applin Warner, "Musematic Relationships"

Bring: *Fun Home*

W 11/3: Zoom with Dr. Jane Barnette, Dramaturg and Professor at the University of Kansas

Read: 1. \*Michael Chemers, "Program Notes," 2. \*Jane Barnette, "Fun Home Notes"

Bring: Barnette chapter in RC

WEEK ELEVEN: Case Study on Asian-American Dramaturgies

M 11/8: 1.

Read: \*Lauren Yee, Ching Chong Chinaman, pgs. TBD 2. Carpenter, "Reading and (re)directing racial scripts" (RC), 3. \*Chow, "How 'Ching Chong' Became the Go-To Slur"

W 11/10:

Read: 1. \*Yee, *Ching Chong Chinaman*, pgs. TBD, 2. \*Cathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings*, excerpts, 3. Jodi Kanter, "Talkbacks" (RC)

WEEK TWELVE: Case Study on Asian-American Dramaturgies, cont'd

M 11/15: 1. \*Dorinne Kondo, *Seamless*, Act 1, 2. \*Galella, "Feeling Yellow," 3. \*Kondo, "Racial Affect and Affective Violence"

W 11/17: 1. \*Kondo, *Seamless*, Act 2, 2. \*Kondo "Playwriting as Reparative Creativity"

WEEK THIRTEEN: Case Study on Dance Dramaturgy

M 11/22:

Conversation with Dr. Amanda Jane Graham, Dance Dramaturg and Curator

Read: TBD

W 11/24: **No class - Thanksgiving**

WEEK FOURTEEN: Bringing it all together

M 11/29:

Read: 1. \*Tarell Alvin McCraney, *Choir Boy*

W 12/1:

Read: 1. Martine Kei Green-Rogers, "Talkbacks for 'sensitive subject matter' productions" (RC)

WEEK FIFTEEN: Bringing it all together, cont'd.

M 12/6:

Read: 1. \*Jocelyn Bioh, *School Girls; or, the African Mean Girls Play*

W 12/8:

Read: 1. Tanya Dean, "Digital engagement: strategies for online dramaturgy" (RC),

FINALS WEEK:

**W 12/16, by end of day**

**DUE: FINAL CASEBOOK**