

Theatre Arts 157: PLAYWRITING

Summer 2022: Session 1

June 20 – July 22, 2022

Synchronous meeting: 10:30am – 12:30pm (PST)
via Zoom (Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Kirsten Brandt, lecturer (she/they)

Email: kirstenb@ucsc.edu

Office Hours: T/TH 1pm-2pm (PST) or by appointment via Zoom

Zoom Office hour meeting Room:

<https://ucsc.zoom.us/j/5216929772?pwd=eW9YUWJ0SU4wTGJRaUJyeDZBanZrdz09>

Sequoia Schirmer, Teaching assistant (she/they)

Email: sschirme@ucsc.edu

Office hours TBA

Zoom Room:

<https://ucsc.zoom.us/j/94956461492?pwd=bTdIVVEzVGkyNWNVYnlyM1JITjduZz09>

Course Description

Students are given the opportunity to write their own scripts and refine them as the result of class discussion and presentation of scenes. Work is on specific problems involving such elements as the structuring of a plot or the development of characters.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Develop their individual approach to writing.
2. Analyze character and story structures as well as identify elements of dramatic writing.
3. Create a short play that contains actable characters within a dramatic structure using the language of the stage.
4. Critique and assess creative work using Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process.
5. Identify and apply industry standard playwriting formats to their own scripts.

Course Philosophy

"It matters whose stories tell stories." – Donna Haraway

This class is designed to help you develop your unique voice as a writer and provide you with a toolkit for further investigation in performative writing.

Course Format

This course will utilize UCSC's online learning system, **Canvas**, for course material and course assignments. We will use **Zoom** for synchronous instruction.

Assignments & Assessment

Scenes: 50% (500 points)

Canvas Discussion Responses: 20% (200 points)

Writing Prompts: 5% (50 points)

Participation: 10% (100 points)

Final Play: 15% (150 points)

Scenes: You will be asked to write five short scenes/monologues (3-7 pages Script Format). These assignments will be shared during synchronous meetings. *100 points each / 500 points total (50%)*

Canvas Discussion Responses: Each week you will be assigned to read articles, listen to podcasts, or watch videos. You will respond to posted discussion questions in Canvas. *40 points each / 200 points total (20%)*

Writing Prompts: There will be two-four writing prompts posted each week. Choose **one** prompt per week. Prompts are designed to get you writing, you should spend a *minimum* of 15 minutes on a prompt (keep writing if the ideas are flowing). Write without self-editing. These are *rough*, not polished. You will upload one prompt per week (the others you can save for later). *10 points each / 50 points total (5%)*

Participation and Preparation: Participating in synchronous class discussions and critiquing fellow students work is as important as hearing critiques of your own. Participation also means volunteering to have your work read as well as serving as an actor for another writer. This course follows Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process for critiques. Please contact instructor right away if you cannot attend a synchronous session for any reason. *10 points per class meeting / 100 points total (10%)*.

Final Play: You will write a one-act play (10 minutes to 30 minutes). You will be required to turn in an outline, a rough draft, and a final draft. Each writer's journey is different and your play can completely alter over the course the five weeks. Writing is re-writing. Your final draft is still a work in progress but must demonstrate growth by wrestling with the ideas, plot, structure and character. *25 points for outline; 25 points for rough draft; 100 points for final play / 150 points total (15%)*

Grading Policy:

Late work is not accepted, but I understand that life happens and we are living in extraordinary times. Please contact me directly if something comes up.

It will take me at least three – four days to provide feedback on your assignments. I will provide direct comments and feedback on your assignments on Canvas using Speedgrader. [Please click here to learn how to access my comments in Canvas.](#) For major assignments, I will include a grading rubric that will be available to you prior to submitting your work. [Please click here to learn how to access grading rubrics for assignments.](#)

How the points breakdown:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>960 to 1000</i>	<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>930 to 959</i>	<i>93 to 95%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>900 to 929</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>860 to 899</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>830 to 829</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>800 to 829</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>760 to 799</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>730 to 759</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>700 to 729</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>660 to 699</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>630 to 659</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>600 to 629</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>0 to 599</i>	<i>0 to 59%</i>

Course Schedule

(instructor reserves the right to change)

All items listed as **due** are due at the start of the synchronous session that day.

Week #1: Character

6/21 Introductions. Canvas. Expectations.

Community Agreements

What is a play? Writing for the theatre & The elements of the stage.

Dramatists Guild Format

Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process.

6/23 Building Character and Given Circumstances.

Due: Scene #1: Memory / Real Story

Week #2: Walking and Talking.

6/28: Dialogue techniques

What a character says. Subtext.

Due: Scene #2: Character point-of-view monologues

6/30: Stage direction techniques

What a character does. Physical Action.

Due: Scene #3: Dialogue

Week #3: Plot and Theme

7/5: Structuring plots
Due: Scene #4: Action Scene

7/7: Weaving in thematic ideas
Due: Final Play Outline

Week #4: Style

7/12: How to say what you want to say
Due: Scene #5: TBA

7/14 Variations in form
Due: Rough draft of final play

Week #5: Rewriting

7/19: Rough draft reviews. Breakout sessions.

7/21: Festival of plays: readings
DUE: Final play

Important Dates

Session 1: Drop Deadline - June 27
Session 1: Withdraw Deadline – July 10

Summer is unique. **You will not be dropped for non-attendance or non-payment.** You must drop yourself. Dropping before the deadline results in a full-tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund).

For all dates and deadlines, including 'change of grade option' (P/NP) and grades due, here is the summer academic calendar:

<https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html>

For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email summer@ucsc.edu.

Class Policies

Emails and Office Hours

I check emails on the *weekdays* (M-F) 10am - 6pm, and my goal is to answer your message as quickly as possible (within two days). I love helping you craft your work and brainstorm your ideas. I recognize that some of you will be in

different time zones, so please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment with me outside of my listed office hours. If you want me to read something *before* our appointment, please send me the draft at least 24 hours prior to our meeting. Appointments are strongly suggested. If you simply want my comments on your play, share the doc with me on google and I will leave comments (I will do my best to comment within 48 hours).

Class Discussion and Work

This is a space for creative exploration. As we explore, we may encounter subject matter that elicits strong feelings. Our goal is to cultivate and inhabit an atmosphere of respect. This begins with active engagement. It involves listening, questioning, and being honest. We don't have to agree on everything but we must respect disagreement and welcome it a part of the creative and learning processes. Please see the university policy on Mature Course Content: Difficult Conversations and Content Advisory below.

Difficult Conversations

In our in-class and online discussions and dialogues, we will have the opportunity to explore challenging, high-stakes issues and increase our understanding of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy. We sometimes will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening. Sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. We will always need respect for others. Thus, an important aim of our classroom interactions will be for us to increase our facility with difficult conversations that arise inside issues of social justice, politics, economics, morality, religion, and other issues where reasonable people often hold diverse perspectives. This effort will ultimately deepen our understanding and allow us to make the most of being in a community with people of many backgrounds, experiences, and positions.

Content Advisory

This course examines some texts, images, and videos that contain descriptions of violence and/or scenes depicting violence. I will do my best to provide individual warnings on the syllabus for course materials and in presentation slides for class content that are particularly sensitive. My hope is that these notifications will help your engagement by allowing you to prepare to work through challenging material. I encourage you to do what you need to care for yourself. If taking care of yourself means that you need to step outside during class (or to a breakout room), either for a short time or for the rest of the class, you may do so without academic penalty. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

UC POLICY ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT / RESOURCES

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of sexual harassment and sexual violence. The sexual harassment of students and employees, including sexual violence, interferes with their right to work and learn in a safe environment and is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX of the Education Act.

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, it is important that you know:

- You can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education ([CARELinks to an external site.](#)) Office ([ucsc.eduLinks to an external site.](#)) by calling (831) 502-2273. The CARE office supports UC Santa Cruz students, faculty and staff affected by sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- Counseling & Psychological Services ([CAPSLinks to an external site.](#)) Office ([ucsc.eduLinks to an external site.](#), 831-459-2628) can provide confidential, counseling support.
- You can report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462.
- Faculty, Teaching Assistants and Advisers are required under the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment \(Links to an external site.\)](#)* to inform the Title IX Office should they become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment. If you are not comfortable with this, please contact [CARELinks to an external site.](#) or [CAPSLinks to an external site.](#) instead (info above).
- To Report a Possible Title IX Violation directly to the University's Title IX Office, students, faculty or staff can use this online reporting form at <https://titleix.ucsc.edu/reporting/index.html>[Links to an external site.](#) or call (831) 459-2462.
- Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UC Santa Cruz Police Department ([ucsc.eduLinks to an external site.](#)): 831-459-2231, ext. 1. For emergencies, call 911.
- Other resources are listed on the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response website: [ucsc.eduLinks to an external site.](#)

*The UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment is online here: <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000385/SVSH> ([Links to an external site.](#))

Questions or concerns regarding the Policy or related procedures and requirements, can be directed to the Title IX Office: 831-459-2462 or cscricca@ucsc.edu.

GENERAL CONDUCT

In this class we abide by the **UCSC Principles of Community**, so please familiarize yourself with these: <https://www.ucsc.edu/about/principles-community.html>Links to an external site..

ACCOMMODATIONS

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to your instructor privately during office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first week of the quarter. At this time, you may discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. All students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services are strongly encouraged to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or email at drc@ucsc.edu.

- DRC online: <https://drc.ucsc.edu>Links to an external site.
- DRC Frequently Asked Questions for prospective and current DRC Students, faculty and Staff, and parents: <https://drc.ucsc.edu/resources-and-forms/faqs.html>Links to an external site.
- Frequently Asked Questions regarding Service and Support animals: <https://drc.ucsc.edu/services-and-accommodations/sa-overview/other-accommodations/service-animals-faqs.html>Links to an external site.
- UC Santa Cruz Service/Support Animal Policy: <https://policy.ucsc.edu/policies/student-affairs/dss-0003.html>

MATURE COURSE CONTENT

In university courses you may be assigned images, films or other material that could contain difficult ideas, uncomfortable language, or graphic depictions of sex or violence. You will be asked to treat these portrayals critically, to consider what is being expressed by the maker, or to examine the potential social impact, and to evaluate the works in a given context. Instructors are always happy to speak with you about the course content and/or your work, and might direct you to CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services) at 831-459-2628 or the Disability Resource Center (drc@ucsc.edu, 831-459-2089) should you need additional support in order to participate and do your best work.

GRADE DISPUTES

If you have questions about the grading of your work, please make arrangements to meet with your teaching assistant (TA) if the course has one. If the course does not have a TA, or if your questions are not resolved, please see the course instructor during office hours. If the matter still remains unresolved, you will be advised on further options.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty. Acts of academic misconduct during the course, including plagiarism, can and usually do result in failure of the course, at the sole discretion of the instructor of record. Your case will be reported to the College Provost as per the Academic Integrity guidelines found on the web at: https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconductLinks to an external site.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING SURVEYS (SETs)

(FORMERLY ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS/OCEs)

The Theater Arts Department collects feedback from students at the end of each course in the form of Student Experience of Teaching Surveys (SETs). You will receive an email when the evaluation/survey is available. The email will provide information about the evaluation as well as a link to it online. When you receive the email, please click the link, log in, and complete the evaluation. Student submissions are anonymous and confidential. Instructors cannot identify which submissions belong to which students and will only be able to review the data collected after all grades have been submitted. Please give serious thought to your comments. This survey will become part of the instructor's personnel file to be reviewed by colleagues and administration when considering the instructor's future teaching assignments and promotions. Your comments will be available by the instructor only after grading your work and may be used to improve future offerings of the course.