

## Theatre Arts 157: PLAYWRITING

Summer 2024: Session 1

June 24 – July 26, 2023

Synchronous meeting: 6:30pm – 9:00pm (PST)  
via Zoom (Tuesday and Thursday)

**Kirsten Brandt**, lecturer (she/they)

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Office Hours: Before or afterclass, or by appointment

### 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 containsactable 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: 15% (150 points)  
Writing Prompts: 10% (100 points)  
Participation: 10% (100 points)  
Final Play: 15% (150 points)

**Scenes:** You will be asked to write four short scenes/monologues (3-7 pages Script Format). These assignments will be shared during synchronous meetings. *125 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. *30 points each / 150 points total (15%)*

**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). *20 points each / 100 points total (10%)*

**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>
A	930 to 989	93 to 100%
A minus	900 to 929	90 to 92%
B plus	860 to 899	86 to 89 %
B	830 to 829	83 to 85%
B minus	800 to 829	80 to 82%
C plus	760 to 799	76 to 79%
C	730 to 759	73 to 75%
C minus	700 to 729	70 to 72%
D plus	660 to 699	66 to 69%
D	630 to 659	63 to 65%
D minus	600 to 629	60 to 62%
F	0 to 599	0 to 59%

### 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

6/25 Introductions. Canvas. Expectations. \*\*\*this class meets the full 9am-12:30

Community Agreements

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

Dramatists Guild Format

Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process.

6/27 Building Character and Given Circumstances.

*Due:* Scene #1: Memory / Real Story

#### Week #2: Walking and Talking.

7/2: Dialogue techniques

What a character says.

Stage direction techniques

What a character does. Physical Action

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

7/4: No Class: Fourth of July holiday

*Due:* Scene #3: Dialogue

#### Week #3: Plot and Theme

7/9: Structuring plots  
*Due:* Scene #4: Action/Stage Direction Scene

7/11: Weaving in thematic ideas  
*Due:* Final Play Outline

#### **Week #4: Style**

7/16: How to say what you want to say

7/18: Variations in form  
*Due:* Rough draft of final play

#### **Week #5: Rewriting**

7/23: Rough draft reviews. Breakout sessions.

7/25: Festival of plays: readings  
***DUE:*** Final play

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](mailto: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.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All members of the UCSC community benefit from an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. You are expected to present your own work and acknowledge the work of others in order to preserve the integrity of scholarship.

Academic integrity includes:

- Following exam rules
- Using only permitted materials during an exam
- Viewing exam materials only when permitted by your instructor
- Keeping what you know about an exam to yourself
- Incorporating proper citation of all sources of information

- Submitting your own original work

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Disclosing exam content during or after you have taken an exam
- Accessing exam materials without permission
- Copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source, that is submitted for grading as your own
- Plagiarism, including use of Internet material without proper citation
- Using cell phones or other electronics to obtain outside information during an exam without explicit permission from the instructor
- Submitting your own work in one class that was completed for another class (self-plagiarism) without prior permission from the instructor.
- Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Misconduct page](#) at the [Division of Undergraduate Education](#).

## ACCESSIBILITY

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 affiliate with the DRC. I encourage all students to benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu). For students already affiliated, make sure that you have requested Academic Access Letters, where you intend to use accommodations. You can also request to meet privately with me during my office hours or by appointment, as soon as possible. I would like us to discuss how we can implement your accommodations in this course to ensure your access and full engagement in this course.

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

## RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

UC Santa Cruz welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation without penalty. You should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your instructor early in the term. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the [Dean of Students office](#).

## ALL-GENDER RESTROOMS

UC Santa Cruz is committed to the well-being of all students and cares about all students feeling safe and welcome, regardless of their gender identity, expression, and/or embodiment. The [Lionel Cantú Queer Center](#) has worked with students and campus staff to create more safe and accessible restrooms for transgender and genderqueer students, staff, faculty, alumni, and UCSC visitors. A [complete list of all-gender restrooms](#) on campus was compiled and is maintained by the Cantú Queer Center.

## UC POLICY ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT / RESOURCES

### TITLE IX/CARE ADVISORY

UC Santa Cruz is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, which are explicitly prohibited under Title IX. If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, know that

you are not alone. The Title IX Office, the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) office, and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) are all resources that you can rely on for support.

Please be aware that if you tell me about a situation involving Title IX misconduct, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator. This reporting responsibility also applies to course TAs and tutors (as well to all UCSC employees who are not designated as “confidential” employees, which is a special designation granted to counselors and CARE advocates). Although I have to make that notification, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential resources are available through [CARE](#). Confidentiality means CARE advocates will not share any information with Title IX, the police, parents, or anyone else without explicit permission. CARE advocates are trained to support you in understanding your rights and options, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. You can contact CARE at (831) 502-2273 or [care@ucsc.edu](mailto:care@ucsc.edu).

In addition to CARE, these resources are available to you:

- If you need help figuring out what resources you or someone else might need, visit the [Sexual Violence Prevention & Response \(SAFE\) website](#), which provides information and resources for different situations.
- [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) can provide confidential counseling support. Call them at (831) 459-2628.
- You can also report gender discrimination and sexual harassment and violence directly to the University's [Title IX Office](#), by calling (831) 459-2462 or by using their [online reporting tool](#).
- Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UC Police Department, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1.
- For emergencies, call 911.

## 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.

## REPORT AN INCIDENT OF HATE OR BIAS

The University of California, Santa Cruz is committed to maintaining an objective, civil, diverse and supportive community, free of coercion, bias, hate, intimidation, dehumanization or exploitation. The Hate/Bias Response Team is a group of administrators who support and guide students seeking assistance in determining how to handle a bias incident involving another student, a staff member, or a faculty member. To report an incident of hate or bias, please use the following form: [Hate/Bias Report Form](#).

## 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>.

## STUDENT SERVICES

Counseling and Psychological Services

Many students at UCSC face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

## Student Success and Engagement Hub

The Division of Student Success provides campus-wide coordination and leadership for student success programs and activities across departments, divisions, the colleges, and administrative units.

### **Tutoring and Learning Support**

At Learning Support Services (LSS), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

### **Slug Support Program**

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction.

To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the Dean of Students Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at [deanofstudents@ucsc.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@ucsc.edu).

### **Slug Help/Technology**

The ITS Support Center is your single point of contact for all issues, problems or questions related to technology services and computing at UC Santa Cruz. To get technological help, simply email [help@ucsc.edu](mailto:help@ucsc.edu).

### **On-Campus Emergency Contacts**

For all other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, Click here to go to UCSC's Emergency Services page. Always dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.

### **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](mailto: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\\_misconduct](https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct)

### **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.

### **LAPTOP COMPUTERS AND MOBILE DEVICES:**



Laptops can be a useful tool in the service of teaching and learning when used productively and respectfully.

A few common sense rules:

1. Always set up your laptop before the beginning of class. Setting up the computer and booting it up can take a few minutes depending on what applications are set to open at startup. Turn off all other mobile devices before lecture begins.
2. Disable sound.
3. During lecture and classroom discussion, you should not be connected to network resources. Being online invites many distractions - web surfing, email, chats, etc. Chatting or emailing during class is no more acceptable than talking on a cell phone during class time. Additionally, your networked screens are distracting to those sitting near and behind you.

If you are found to be doing anything other than note-taking (or sanctioned network activity) you will be asked to leave the class immediately and will be marked as absent for that day. Your instructor reserves the right to further limit laptop use in their classes. For example, you may be asked to close your computer during screenings or be asked to sit in a certain area of the room if you are actively using your laptop.