

THEATRE 208:
21st Century Dramaturgy



Teatro Luna, Chicago

Instructor: Dr. Valleri Robinson (She/Her) **Email:** valleri2@illinois.edu
Room:

Valleri's Office Hours: Fridays 11-11:50am.

TA: TBA

Course Objectives:

1. To investigate current trends in the contemporary theatre including immersive theatre, intermedial performance, documentary/verbatim theatre, adaptation, solo performance, and approaches to devising theatre;
2. To produce materials that challenge us to explore contemporary performance practices and our own individual artistic sensibilities.



Complicité, UK



Punchdrunk International, *Sleep No More* in Shanghai

Required Texts:

Luis Alfaro

Electricidad

Anna Deveare Smith

Notes from the Field

Readings on compass/online:

Caridad Svich, *Red Bike*

Naomi Iizuka, *Anon(ymous)*

Otun Rasheed, *The Gods are Still Not to Blame*

Andrei Kureichik, *Insulted. Belarus.* and *Voices of the New Belarus*

Articles as assigned

Viewings:

The Container (Digital Theatre Plus)

Insulted. Belarus. (Digital Theatre Plus)

“Acting for Freedom: the Battle of the Belarus Free Theatre”

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_haByIs0ojo&t=2641s)

Podcasts:

https://pen.org/these-truths-lynn-nottage-jeremy-o-harris/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social-pug&fbclid=IwAR2oKUespRzGSx12JOeGMnxatTqiok23uKzCnrCE3BSNvdOtDfsQbXz6M

Useful Website: *The Theatre Times*: <https://thetheatretimes.com>

Grading:

8 Short Answer worksheet assignments	80 points
Final Project: Curating Performance	30 points
Final Presentation	10 points
Class participation	30 points

Total: **150 points**

A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69%; F=0-59%

DUE DATES:

All Assignments are due for each UNIT on the week designated in the syllabus by **Wednesdays at 11:00am.**

FINAL PRESENTATIONS:

Your final presentation will be scheduled for a Wednesday at 11am in the final 2 weeks of class. Attendance to presentations is required unless a prior arrangement is made.

ZOOM/ In class Discussions: Wednesdays at 11am

Each Wednesday at 11am, Zoom and/or In-class discussions of course materials will be held. Students should complete the videos, readings, and assignments prior to these discussions. Announcements and reminders will be made during this time, and these discussions give you an opportunity to express ideas and opinions and hear the opinions of your colleagues. Attendance is strongly encouraged. A minimum attendance of 10 class meetings is expected for full participation credit (unless you make arrangements with the instructors in the first 3 weeks due to a need for an alternate path to course engagement).

SPECIAL EVENTS: (Attendees receive 10 points extra credit)

Luis Alfaro Interview, Feb. 25 Spurlock Museum, 4pm

Viewing *Insulted. Belarus.* + talkback with Andrei Kureichik, Spurlock Museum, March 31, 6pm

Talk with Andrei Kureichik, KCPA Tryon, April 14, 4pm

Course Communication

Compass: the syllabus, video, readings, and assignments are posted on compass. We will use the discussion forum as needed to discuss and coordinate questions that arise.

Weekly email from instructor: Each Monday, the instructor will send weekly reminders and updates.

Wednesday discussions: Fridays at 11 am, discussion groups are held on Zoom (at first) then in person.

<https://illinois.zoom.us/j/85813450843?pwd=dWdkM0k2dGVtYjFaUVpEK2gveHhiUT09>

Zoom office hours: Fridays at 11 am are Instructor and TA Zoom group or individual office hours, by appointment.

<https://illinois.zoom.us/j/89094855899?pwd=SHIFZ1RVRFN4ZzNMbEZlZlE0Zz09>

Email responses: The instructor and TA will check email in the mornings and afternoons, M-F. We will respond to email between 8-5 M-F. If you have not received a response to your question within 48hrs, please send the email again or check to see if the question was answered in a group communication.

NOTE ON READINGS/VIEWINGS:

Some of these plays address violence, self harm, sexual violence, racism and racial violence, and other traumas. Alternative readings/viewings may be requested. If you are struggling emotionally with the course content, please contact the instructors or campus counselling.

**SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO COURSE DEVELOPMENTS

Course Schedule

Week 1, January 19: Orientation

ATTEND THE FOLLOWING ZOOM SESSION at 11:00am Wednesday:

Zoom Wednesday: Introductions/ Course Q&A
Introduction to Course
Introduction to *The Theatre Times* and Digital Theatre +

<https://illinois.zoom.us/j/85813450843?pwd=dWdkM0k2dGVtYjFaUVpEK2gveHhiUT09>

Week 2, January 26: Dramaturgy in the 21st Century

Video: Natasha Tsakos's Multimedia Theatre Adventure
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlj9aPKB9m0>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTjvFp9loMQ>
Anne Cattaneo on Dramaturgy

Readings:

<https://www.americantheatre.org/2021/11/05/a-manifesto-for-the-future-stage-performance-is-a-human-right/>

Week 3, February 2: Exploring 21st Century Theatre

Assignment 1: Evaluate 21st Century Theatre Company

Podcast listening:

https://pen.org/these-truths-lynn-nottage-jeremy-o-harris/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social-pug&fbclid=IwAR2oKUespRzGSx12JOeGMnxatTqiok23uKzCnrCE3BSNydOtDfshsQbXz6M

Reading: "What makes a Turg Tick," Liz Engleman and M.B. Dixon
(compass)

Week 4, February 9: Play Analysis

Readings: Fuchs's "Visit to a Small Planet" (compass)
Blackbird by Suzan-Lori Parks (compass)

Performance Viewing: *The Container* by Clare Bayley (Digital Theatre +)

Assignment 2: Worksheet on *Blackbird*

In-class Wed: Powerpoint on Fuchs in Focus/ Discussion *The Container*

Week 5, February 16: Play Analysis Continued

"How to Read a Play," Amanda Watson, Associate Producer, Alliance Theatre
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZH9e8pbg4gM>

Readings: *Red Bike* by Caridad Svich (compass)

Assignment 3: Worksheet *Red Bike*

Week 6, February 23: Adaptation

Readings: *Electricidad* by Luis Alfaro

SPECIAL EVENT: Luis Alfaro Interview, Feb. 25 Spurlock Museum, 4pm
*Attendance 10 points extra credit

Week 7, March 2: Adaptation Continued

Readings: *Anon(ymous)* by Naomi Iizuka

Assignment 4: Analysis Worksheet for *Anon(ymous)*

Week 8, March 9: Immersive Theatre

Readings:

1. https://thetheatretimes.com/immersive-theatre-takes-hold-moscow/?fbclid=IwAR2eVNmIYo7zxjnRL692PE1uv0SMPrt58jh2IVVe6kccl03cV_0_bHfy5Bs
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/games/2019/feb/08/playable-shows-are-the-future-what-punchdrunk-theatre-learned-from-video-games>
3. <https://thetheatretimes.com/found-at-the-cell-immersive-theatrical-experience/>

Assignment 5: Sketch for Immersive Theatre event

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10, March 23:

Readings: *The Gods Are Still Not to Blame* by Otun Rasheed
(compass)

(In class zoom visit with Otun Rasheed)

Week 11, March 30, Documentary Theatre

Reading: *Insulted. Belarus.* by Andrei Kureichik

Video: “The Battle of Belarus Free Theatre”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_haByIs0ojo

Assignment 6: *Insulted. Belarus.* worksheet

Week 12, April 6, Documentary Theatre, continued

Reading: *Notes from the Field* by Anna Deveare Smith

Video: “Verbatim Theatre” Riot Road Theatre

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTbdYqCs0gc>

Assignment 7: Verbatim Theatre worksheet

Weeks 13-14, April 13 and 20, Documentary Theatre Workshop with Andrei Kureichik

Assignment 8: Sketch for Documentary Theatre Event (Due Nov. 11)

Weeks 15-16, April 27 and May 4 – Present Grant Proposals for Performance Event

Academic Integrity

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign *Student Code* should also be considered as a part of this syllabus. Students should pay particular attention to Article 1, Part 4: Academic Integrity. Read the Code at the following URL: <http://studentcode.illinois.edu/>.

Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade. Every student is expected to review and abide by the Academic Integrity Policy:

http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-401.html. Ignorance is not an excuse for any academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to read this policy to avoid any misunderstanding. Do not hesitate to ask the instructor(s) if you are ever in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or any other breach of academic integrity.

Community of Care

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regards to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the Student Assistance Center (217-333-0050 or <http://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral/>). Based on your report, the staff in the Student Assistance Center reaches out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe.

Further, we understand the impact that struggles with mental health can have on your experience at Illinois. Significant stress, strained relationships, anxiety, excessive worry, alcohol/drug problems, a loss of motivation, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can all interfere with optimal academic performance. We encourage all students to reach out to talk with someone, and we want to make sure you are aware that you can access mental health support at the Counseling Center (<https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>) or McKinley Health Center (<https://mckinley.illinois.edu/>). For mental health emergencies, you can call 911 or walk in to the Counseling Center, no appointment needed.

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the as soon as possible. To insure that

disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the beginning, students with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this class should contact Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) and see the instructor as soon as possible. If you need accommodations for any sort of disability, please speak to me after class, or make an appointment to see me, or see me during my office hours. DRES provides students with academic accommodations, access, and support services. To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603 (V/TDD), or e-mail disability@illinois.edu. <http://www.disability.illinois.edu/>.

Disruptive Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution for disciplinary action.

Emergency Response Recommendations

Emergency response recommendations can be found at the following website: <http://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/>. I encourage you to review this website and the campus building floor plans website within the first 10 days of class. <http://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/building-emergency-action-plans/>.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Any student who has suppressed their directory information pursuant to *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) should self-identify to the instructor to ensure protection of the privacy of their attendance in this course. See <http://registrar.illinois.edu/ferpa> for more information on FERPA.

Religious Observances

The Religious Observance Accommodation Request form is available at <http://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/resources/docs/Religious-Observance-Accommodation-Request-Form.pdf>. Submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students (helpdean@illinois.edu) by the end of the second week of the

course; in the case of exams or assignments scheduled after this period, students should submit the form to the instructor and to the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible.

Sexual Misconduct Reporting Obligation

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options.

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential.

Other information about resources and reporting is available here: wecare.illinois.edu.