Dramaturgy: Kurt Well's 'Street Scene': An American Opera and the American Immigrant's Experience

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A DRAMATURG DOES WHAT?

A Literature Review

Presented to

The Academic Faculty

By

Robert Hadaway

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in American Studies

Kennesaw State University
May 2015
Preface

As I begin this capstone project, as dramaturg for Street Scene to be presented by the departments of Theatre and Music at the University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD) in the spring of 2015, I am exited by the prospect of beginning my research of immigrants in the 1940’s and their life experience in the Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood of New York City. Preparing for the Literature Review portion of the capstone, I had intended to delve into the analysis of Street Scene, an American opera by Kurt Weill, Langford Hughes and Elmer Rice. I felt like this literature review would be a great beginning point to the research that I, as dramaturg, would have to do. It came as quite a surprise when my faculty capstone committee suggested that I begin my capstone with an investigation of dramaturgy. “Explore the field!” recommended Dr. Ugena Whitlock of Kennesaw State University’s Interdisciplinary Studies and Education Departments, humbly stating, “I don’t know anything about dramaturgy and as this may be a career option for you, go find what you can about it.”

I began my personal dramaturgical journey with a mentor, Dr. Jane Barnette, now with the University of Kansas, who lead me to dramaturgy, unbeknown to me at the time, through her Chautauqua colloquium project in her undergraduate theatre history course. She suggested that I begin my readings for this review with Michael Mark Chemers’ Ghost Light, a text used in her dramaturgy course at
Kennesaw State University. My capstone committee member from UMD, Jenna Soleo-Shanks, immediately confirmed this suggestion that I use Chemers as a starting text. She also suggested *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, which was so new when it arrived from Amazon, the pages of the book were still warm from the presses. I began also, with literature that Chemers recommended in his text including *Dramaturgy and Performance* by Cathy Turner and Synne K. Behrndt; I could easily see their influence on Chemers work. I am pleased with the trail that led me to a wide and varied sample of readings.

I will be discussing several elements of dramaturgy in this review, although many aspects will be limited in a paper of this length. As there is so much conversation as to what a dramaturg is, or isn’t, or might be, or could be, I will most certainly look at what scholars are saying. I will look mainly at the process of the production dramaturg, as that is where my focus will be at UMD. Working in the university setting for this dramaturgy project, I will be exploring how young dramaturges are being trained, referring primarily to syllabi from colleges to see what is being taught in dramaturgical classes and programs from around the country. Following this review of the literature, I will submit a proposal for the capstone project that will take place in the spring of 2015, acting as dramaturg for *Street Scene*, UMD’s Theatre and Music department’s spring production. I will further discuss what UMD’s resident dramaturg, Jenna Soleo-Shanks, and production director, Alice Pierce have ask of me as dramaturg and then what I would like to accomplish in addition to the final reflection of this capstone project.
I. Introduction

U.S. Colleges and Universities are continuing to offer dramaturgy as a part of the course work in theatre degree programs. According to The Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, an association for scholars and professionals, fifteen universities offers degree programs in dramaturgy. Some 40 or more offer course work.¹ With an ever growing concern as to what a dramaturg is and what the job entails (scholars can’t even decide how to spell the word. I have chosen to eliminate the pesky e at the end), and with a very limited amount of dramaturgical career options, what does university dramaturgy curricula look like? After examining scholarly work on dramaturgy, I propose to look at several syllabi to see how students are introduced to the field and their future profession.

II. Dramaturgy

It was during my senior year as a Theatre and Performance Studies undergrad at Kennesaw State University that I took a course in Dramaturgy from Dr. Jane Barnette. I had never considered being a dramaturg; it had never even crossed my mind. At the time I was acting in a show and needed a course that was timed so that I could make rehearsals, I settled on a course in dramaturgy. It wouldn’t be long before I realized I had a lot of qualities that just might help to make me a strong dramaturg. Dr. Barnette approached me, soon after completing

¹ Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas. LMDA.org.
the course, and asked if I would assist her in the dramaturgy for a production of *The Elephant's Graveyard* by George Brandt being performed at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. With a background in circus performance (I'm a former Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus clown), I immediately said, “Yes!” I excitedly told my mother, an arts patron for years, and her response was a great ego deflator: “Oh you get to write those stuffy notes in the program that no one ever reads!” She said it as if she were joking, but she really had no idea what else a dramaturg might do.

Many scholars who have written about dramaturgy have relayed stories containing quirky comments like my mother’s. American theatre scholars, since the rise of American dramaturgy in the 1970’s, have debated the question: What is dramaturgy? How do you succinctly answer that question for an inquiring audience member who sees only program notes and possibly, although rarely outside academia, a lobby display? What do dramaturges use as the ‘Elevator pitch’ when asked what they do as dramaturgs? While some attempts to answer seem perfectly logical and scholarly, a consensus between dramaturges, directors, designers, actors, publicity and marketing departments, education departments, literary managers, stage managers, and artistic directors has yet to perfectly define the dramaturges purpose and job description, or even agree if the dramaturg is needed at all. Cathy Turner and Synne K. Behrndt, in their book *Dramaturgy and Performance*, see it this way: “When we are asked what the word means, and what a ‘dramaturg’ might be, it is not helpful to state that these questions are unanswerable. A provisional or partial answer, acknowledged as such, may be the
beginning of a new enquiry.”2 Indeed the literature and the scholarly discussions that I have found on dramaturgy are wrestling with simply answering this perhaps unanswerable question.

Dramaturgy has been in use since the beginning of theatre history. Dramaturgy is imperative to the play and the production, as a guide to the aesthetics of the production. The overseeing of the composition of the play, the structure, and architecture is dramaturgy.3 Lawrence Switzky, Assistant Professor; Graduate Faculty; and Undergraduate Instructor at the University of Toronto, artfully uses the metaphor of dramaturgy being likened to architecture in his observation that dramaturgy is “regularly involved with the architechtonics of performance.”4 Michael Mark Chemers, an associate Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of California-Santa Cruz and the founding Director of the Bachelor in Fine Arts Dramaturgy program at Carnegie Mellon University, begins his exploration as to the answer:

In practice, dramaturgy refers to the accumulated techniques that all theatrical artist employ to do three things:

1. Determine what the aesthetic architecture of a piece of dramatic literature actually is (analysis).


2. Discover everything needed to transform that inert script into a living piece of theatre (research).

3. Apply that knowledge in a way that makes sense to the living audience at this time in this place (practical application).

Restated: Analyze the text, do the research needed and apply that wisdom to your artistry, for your audience.

Dramaturgy derives from the Greek word *Dramaturgia*; Composition of a play. G.E. Lessing, in the late 1700s, was known to first use dramaturgy in a form that would be familiar to us today. He wrote many essays on play composition, structure, acting, and audience in an effort to refine the German theatre. It was Bertold Brecht who in the first half of the 20th century took dramaturgy in Germany to a new modern form. He believed that every aspect of theatre was a source for dramaturgy, from the theatre lobby to the buttons on a costume. He often hired several dramaturges for a show, while at the same time believed that every one on the production team was a dramaturg, all having a say in the dramaturgy. Today in the German theatre it is not unusual for the dramaturges name to be listed with or above the artistic director’s name. A model, rarely if ever achieved in American theatre, the dramaturg in Germany is a vital role as a theatres operations manager, literary manager, as a production team member and as collaborator.

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5 Chemers. 3.

6 Turner and Behrndt, 17-69.
Note here, that dramaturgy and the dramaturg are not one and the same. If Dramaturgy is the noun then the dramaturg is the verb. Cindy Brizzell, of Empire State College, and Andre’ Lepecki, of The Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, insist that dramaturgy is invisible: that dramaturgy will happen whether or not a dramaturg is present. Theatre being a collaborative art form, dramaturgy is going to naturally happen as the team of artist creates theatre. Dramaturgy can be accomplished among the director, designers, actors and other members of the production staff. This quote from Hans-Thies Lehmann, a German theatre theorist at the University of Kent; and professor of theatre studies at the University of Leipzig, Patrick Primavesi, are very encompassing to what dramaturgy is best thought to be:

The function of theatre as a public sphere requires a dramaturgical discourse that is more ready to pose questions than to give answers and that is constantly reflecting its relation to political context without patronizing the audience or insisting on a particular interpretation. More important than the dramaturg is the dramaturgy, collective whenever possible.

The definition of Dramaturgy seems more easily defined than what a dramaturg is or does. Every scholar read for this literature review agreed that dramaturgy is a

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7 Switsky. 176-177.


real and necessary function in the theatrical process; weather or not they agree that a dramaturg is a necessary position on a production team is a much more divergent discussion.

**III. So What Does a Dramaturg Do?**

Audience Member: What did you, as dramaturg, actually do for this production? What appeared on the stage that is a result of what you did?
Mark Bly: I can't point to anything specifically, but if you took a knife to that play, it would bleed me.
--Overheard by Michael Mark Chemers, 23 August 2007, Arena Stage talkback.

Georg II, Duke of Saxe Meinigen is considered to be the first theatre director. Directors were an invention of the late 19th Century, at which time they were not considered a necessary position in the theatre. One case in point: actors, producers, the writers of plays, or a combination of these, performed the role of director in the Elizabethan period of theatre. Mark Bly, a freelance dramaturg and professor of playwriting at Hunter College, in his article “Bristling with Multiple Possibilities,” reminds us that only in the last hundred and fifty years has the role of the director come to be the compulsory role in the theatrical process that it is today.\(^\text{10}\) With the advance in theatre technology, theatre roles such as lighting, set design, playwriting and others, have increased the creative possibilities in the production of theatre.

Now, more than ever the role of director is considered an absolute indispensable role. The specializing of the production team’s roles increases the need for a director to oversee the production team, becoming a necessity to guide a production to a cohesive piece of art. The Dramaturg today is taking the same route to acceptance. Just as directors, in the early stages of their development, were seen with contempt, scorn and hatred from actors, designers, playwrights and the like, today’s emerging dramaturgs are not without a similar contempt. Theatre scholars as well as practitioners today are arguing whether dramaturgs are a necessity, a luxury, or whether they are even needed at all! Cindy Brizzell and Andre’ Lepecki relay a common sentiment of critics, actors, directors and designers: “A good dramaturgy is imperative for the success of a production. But not so many will agree without reservations that a good (if any) dramaturg is imperative for a good production.”

Michael Mark Chemers’ first chapter in his book *Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy*, is titled “What the #$%@ is a Dramaturg?” This simple and humorous chapter title is a recurring question among scholarly writings on dramaturgy and the dramaturg. It is a question for which no one has a definitive answer. In his article Dramaturgy in Education, Oscar G. Brockett, a widely

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12 Chemers, Bly, Turner and Behrntd, McCabe.

respected theatre historian at The University of Texas for some 25 years, promotes the dramaturg’s principal goal: “to promote integration of the knowledge and perception learned from theatre history, dramatic literature, and theory with the skills and expertise needed to realize the potential of a particular time and place for a particular audience.”\textsuperscript{14} While Lawrence Switzky simply sees the dramaturg as “One who keeps the whole in mind,”\textsuperscript{15} Terry McCabe insists only that a dramaturg does the work for a lazy director.\textsuperscript{16} McCabe echoes the dismay of production personnel asking, “Why do we need this new position in the theatre?” The website of The Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas,\textsuperscript{17} offers quotes, throughout the pages of their website, from members expressing their definitions of dramaturgy and the job. These quotes, from professionals, students and scholars of dramaturgy, differ greatly in their scope. This ambiguity towards the answer must originate from the scope of the dramaturges jobs.

It can be surmised that scholars are dividing dramaturges into three general categories: 1) The dramaturg as assistant to a playwright and new works development, 2) The dramaturg for a theatre company, often called an institutional


\textsuperscript{17} Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America. lmda.org.
dramaturgy,” this would include faculty dramaturgs at universities. And 3) The production dramaturg dedicated to work on one specific production. I want to focus here on the role of the production dramaturg, as that will be the focus of my project with the University of Minnesota. However, a discussion of the other two categories will be helpful in understanding the role and nature of the dramaturg.

Pulitzer Prize winner, Tony Kushner used a dramaturg for his playwrighting process for *Angels in America*. Kushner thought so well of the dramaturg’s support that his dramaturg receives 15% of the royalties from the play. Jonathon Larson employed a dramaturg for the musical *Rent*. Larson’s dramaturg brought much attention to dramaturgy when she sued Larson’s estate (he passed away shortly before the shows Broadway premier) for royalties, claiming that she had written much of the text for *Rent*. But it is not the job of the dramaturg to write for the playwright, she is only there as a guide and mentor. As in production dramaturgy, a playwright dramaturg may perform research, suggest theatrical forms and act as a third eye; an editor of sorts.

A theatre company, chiefly regional theatres and universities, may employ full-time institutional dramaturgs. She may act as a literary manager or as an assistant to a literary manager. She will act as a liaison between every department within the theatre company, as well as liaison between each branch of a specific production team and the artistic director, and most importantly she will insure that the audience is connected not only to the play, but also to the theatre. While

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Regional theatres have diverse corporate structures requiring idiosyncratic role fulfillment for dramaturges. The dramaturg may fill positions which include responsibilities such as assisting the literary manager, if not also acting as the literary manager himself, in the selection of a season of plays; educate the education department about the play and prepare study guides, conduct talk backs with audience, work with the marketing department to assure cohesion in all the publicity materials concerning productions. She might oversee freelance directors, designers and production dramaturges. She might work as production dramaturg herself. All the while maintaining the mission and goals of the theatre in the forefront.19

This is a huge job and it may seem that it is an indispensable one as well. Yet Carol Rosen, Professor of English at Stony Brook University where she was previously director of graduate theatre and dramaturgy, disagrees. While discussing the fate of Dramaturgy in America, she sees the institutional dramaturg as the most disposable person on a staff, when financial difficulty surface the dramaturg “finds himself counted among the ‘administrative staff’ and excluded from the ‘creative team’.”20 This is if he has a job at all. She goes on to say that no one in America is “going to make a killing, let alone a living, as a dramaturg.21 At the same point in history (1995) and in the same volume of essays, C.J. Gianakaris

19 Chemers. 144-175


21 Ibid. 190.
refutes Rosen claiming that professional theatres see great value in dramaturg by noting that over one hundred dramaturgs were serving in professional theatres.22

What seems to be more common, especially among smaller theatre companies is the hiring of freelance dramaturges to act as production dramaturgs. This is the position that I will be filling for Street Scene at the University of Minnesota and I want to go into some detail as to what being a production dramaturg might entail. Therefore I would like to compile a list of possible jobs that a production dramaturg might perform. I tried to categorize the list, but found the process quite daunting as any of these verbs could be placed on any dramaturg depending on the situation.

- Historical research
- Casting Research
- Play analysis
- Interpretation
- Maintain an objective perspective
- Lobby displays
- Program notes
- Be a sounding board
- Mediator between all parties
- Actor glossary
- Prepare promotional material
- Collaborate
- Give feedback
- Archive production materials
- Act as critic
- Apply theory to production
- Ask questions at every step
- Facilitate talk backs with audiences
- Research production history
- Prepare a Casebook (hardcopy or online)
- Advise directors, designers and actors
- Adaptation
- Edit scripts

• Prepare a study guide
• Problem solve
• Create a public website for the show
• Represent the audience in rehearsals
• Educate the audience
• Attend rehearsals and give notes
• Attend production meetings

This job list may seem daunting, and it is. Mark Bly speaks of the Guthrie theater when he was asked to write a job description: “The dramaturg’s job description alone ran to nine pages single spaced.” Turner and Behrndt open their chapter on Production Dramaturgy stating:

“No two dramaturges, collaborations or productions will be the same, and the dramaturgical role will always depend on the needs of the particular project. For this reason, it is impossible to describe a representative process, since due to the very contextual nature of the production dramaturg’s work, all processes will be different.”

It is a consensus among scholars that the dramaturg’s job is fluid and ever-changing. A Director and his production team will utilize a dramaturg depending on the director’s requirements and his attitude towards the use of a dramaturg. The workload could be simply impossible for an eight-week rehearsal period, but seldom is every possible job a requirement for a particular production. For Example, a dramaturg could be working as an assistant literary manger in a fulltime dramaturg position at the Alliance Theatre Company, while at the same time.

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23 Chemers, Jonas and Proehl, Turner and Behrndt, Bly.


25 Turner and Behrndt. 147.
time be working for a playwright on a new work, she may also act as the production
dramaturg while the play is being mounted at the Alliance Theatre. Each category of
dramaturg type (playwright, institution, production) can and often will overlap.

As a distracter, Terry McCabe, from Columbia College, writes an article
entitled: “A Good Director Doesn’t Need a Dramaturg”. His overall definition of a
production dramaturg is unparalleled with other scholar’s notions:

The Production dramaturg is intended to be a kind of
ombudsman for the play, someone with no direct stake in the
production who can be an effective advocate for the script’s
protection during the bruising production process as well as
being a devil’s advocate for the director’s vision, helping
shape it and then helping it keep true to itself. The dramaturg
is steeped in theatre history, literature, and criticism, and is
there to help the director formulate an approach to the play
that takes advantage of these disciplines. He or she is also
there as an information resource for the other artist working
on the play, and to act as a gadfly throughout the process,
speaking up to the director (in private) should the production
begin to lose sight of the play, or, in the case of a new play,
pushing the playwright (also in private) towards script
improvements.26

No other scholar in my readings articulated the production dramaturg’s purpose
into such a succinct and eloquent paragraph. McCabe goes on to say that since a
dramaturg has in the past been handled by playwrights, directors, designers and
actors, the dramaturg is an invented “professional fifth wheel: not needed when
the car is rolling smoothly and not in a position to help when the alignment is out
of whack.”27 His argument concludes with the notion that dramaturgs are a ‘non-

26 McCabe.

27 Ibid. 5.
position’ and to keep them busy we must take jobs away from the director and give them to the dramaturg. Meanwhile, Brocket, discussing dramaturgy in academia, agrees that directors should have an extensive historical, critical and theoretical education to bring a production to full fruition. He goes on about the “unspoken assumption that to question any of these premises is to doubt the director’s competence and to undermine directorial authority.”28 These assumptions have been the downfall of universal acceptance of dramaturgs. If the dramaturg is to be of help to a director, he must have full cooperation of the director, who cannot make the dramaturg a research assistant or an errand runner who provides knowledge and opinion only when specifically called for. It is a process that requires teaching directors that: “where they feel most threatened, is where a dramaturg can be the most help.”29 Richard Pettengill, dramaturg at the Court Theatre, Chicago, counters McCabe quite athletically stating:

At best I can go well beyond the cynical notion that the dramaturg does the work the director is too lazy to do, to the magical point where the dramaturgically engaged mind, with easy access to mines of information, can contribute markedly to a director’s vision and thus to the ultimate impact of a production.30

28 Brockett. 43-44.

29 Chemers,

Brocket also states, “If dramaturgs are to be of significant help, they must learn to ask the right questions.” Several scholars in my reading, including Bly, Chemers, Turner and Behrndt, and Cardullo, have insisted that the most important question that a dramaturg must ask is “Why this play now?” Dramaturgs must ask why this play is relevant to today’s worldview, cultures, and audience. If the play is not worthy of an audience’s interpretations, critical thinking abilities and reflection, we must find a reason, within that play, to make it germane. Why, in this point of history, is this play important and what does this play impart upon us, as theatre scholars, practitioners and audience members? This question will lead dramaturgs in the right direction for research, writing and leadership within a production. Mark Bly tells the story of being asked at a party “What does a dramaturg do?” his simple reply was: “I Question.”

IV: Of What Does Dramaturgy Curricula Consist?

Bert Cardullo from Yale writes: “Future dramaturgs need to be trained too of course. Without prior study of theatre history, criticism, theory and dramatic literature their usefulness to a theatre would be severely limited.” In exploring the role of the academic dramaturg, I questioned: “What are theatre departments

31 Brockett, 44.
32 Chemers, 108.
34 Cardullo, 8.
teaching in their dramaturgy classes?” In response to the definitions put forth by scholars above, I am interested as to whether or not students were given a full scope as to dramaturg job(s) or as Brockett attests, solely being trained as production dramaturges. Last edited in 2010, LMDA’s Guide to Dramaturgy in Universities and Colleges reports that over 40 colleges and universities in the U.S and England offer course work and/or production work in dramaturgy. LMDA also list 15 schools that offer degrees or concentrations.35 I most certainly would expect graduate degrees in dramaturgy would encompass a wide range of dramaturgical exploration, but here I am only concerned with undergraduate, mostly introductory classes, to better discern where emphasis is placed on the universities expectation of the dramaturg.

In no way do I intend the following to be perceived as a scientific or all inclusive study of what is being taught in college classrooms, but rather I offer a simple survey of a small number of courses to see if there may be some trends, or exclusions that might support observations made in the previous discussion of dramaturgy. I have collected most of the syllabuses from the website of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA),36 a professional and


academic organization. The syllabuses that I surveyed include: Dr. Jane Barnette, Kennesaw State University; Art Borreca, The University of Iowa; Dr. Sydney Cheek-O'Donnell, University of Utah; Dr. Shelley Orr, San Diego State University; Dr. Magda Romanska, Emerson College; and Michele Volansky, Washington College (see Appendix I). I have tabulated in the table below subjects briefed in each syllabus, excluded topics that seemed glossed over and included topics backed up by projects or paper topics. Again this is not scientific; professors can, after all, be rather vague in their syllabuses, however I have tried my best to glean the goals from each syllabus studied.

Noticeably, research, theory and text analysis are the most taught attributes of a dramaturg in this sample (see figure 1). All six courses stressed research and play analysis, and it was my assumption that theory had to be included in the teaching of the other two. As research is at the heart of dramaturgical work and this is from an academic perspective, this emphasis should not come as a surprise. These skills can certainly be applied to all three major categories of a dramaturg's job possibilities: playwright, institution, or production.

I find it most astounding that an introductory class does not explore career options. Surely, the subject is broached in lectures, but Romanska is the only professor who had a specific research project on Dramaturgy as a profession. At least, as academics, let us tell students that not every theater in the world or every
playwright/director has a position for a dramaturg. And if they do employ
dramaturgs, in what capacity and to what extent might that employment entail
would be a valuable lesson to be learned.

The remaining course topics seem to point to production dramaturgical skills. This
is fitting because academic student dramaturges are being trained to act as
production dramaturges for school productions. Jumping in as an introduction to
any form of dramaturgy seems to be the advice of many dramaturgs

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Figure 1
when training new dramaturgs.\textsuperscript{37} Since Institutional Dramaturgs encompass many of the same duties of the production dramaturg, it is an easier task to “jump right in.”

Dramaturgical training must encompass more than production work to produce dramaturgs that will become more accepted by playwrights and directors. Going back to Cardullo’s suggested curriculum of “theatre history, criticism, theory and dramatic literature;”\textsuperscript{38} training dramaturgs may be becoming a much more challenging aspect for professors of theatre. Jeanne Willcoxon of Olaf College, in a report of a roundtable discussion at a preconference meeting of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education in August of 2014 commented: “…the theatre history course itself is in danger of elimination.” The roundtable discussed students who are unprepared and uninterested in theatre history and the ways in which these teachers are engaging students to incorporate the dramaturgy into other aspects of the theatre in which the students have interests. Much of the discussion, centered on efforts to engage without forfeiting the labor of a rich learning while finding a teaching structure that does not challenge student comfort levels.\textsuperscript{39} With this dwindling interest not only dramaturgs but all theatre artist seem less likely to bring a better dramaturgy to their art.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{37} Chemers, Bly, Rosen.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{38} Cardullo. 8.}

Carol Rosen opens her article “The Ghost Light of our Theatres: The Fate of contemporary American Dramaturgs” with the bold statement: “The dramaturg is probably the only member of the American university production team who considers the dramaturg to be an indispensable member of the production team.”

With this sentiment from faculty directors and their staffs, dramaturgs have a long journey toward acceptance and confirmation that they are more than fact checkers and coffee makers. It should be a goal that we are training directors, designers and actors how to be, as well as to use a dramaturg. Only then, when these students are working in professional theatres, will they use dramaturgs in a way that benefits all.

V. Conclusion

Defining what dramaturgy is seems fairly simple. To define what a dramaturg is, and what a dramaturg does, seems daunting and rife with distress for scholars, practitioners and students. As theatre artist we must all come to a consensus and it seems that scholarship is engaging in a discussion trying to do just that! As a new season for the dramaturg arrives, the scope of work involved is burgeoning. Dance, devised pieces and avant-garde productions, using little or no text, are learning the value of a dramaturg. Many titles included in The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy, announce that Dramaturgy is embracing the phenomenon of globalization in our ever-changing world. In Romanska’s introduction to the

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40 Carol Rosen. 177.
collection of essays she states, “With the rise of the new information age, theatre
making has not been immune to the fast-paced global exchange of goods and ideas.”

41 Going forward dramaturgs must, according to Walter Byonsok Chon, work as
cultural liaisons between audience and portrayed cultures, and as cultural
educators to production teams and the material.42

It is hopeful that educators are attempting to and will continue to increase
the efforts to train dramaturgs so that they may perform what ever it is that they
decide their job is in the professional theatre. Yes there is a lack of scholarship, but
it is increasing. With a boost in educating playwrights and directors as well as
dramaturgy students, dramaturgy and the practitioner’s use of dramaturgs is here
to stay.


42 Walter Byonhsok Chon. “Intercultural Dramaturgy: Dramaturg as
Cultural Liaison,” The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy, Edited by
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WORKS CONSULTED


Project Proposal

As I joined the American Studies Master’s Program at Kennesaw State University in spring 2013, it was set in my mind to explore folk tales and folklore as a concentration in my studies. My bachelor’s degree in Theatre and Performance Studies fueled my love for storytelling. As I prepared for this capstone I had complete tunnel vision on a capstone involving previous interest in Joel Chandler Harris and the Wren’s Nest, his home place in Atlanta, Georgia. My focus was the cultural exchange in the retelling of the stories, and respect of the culture as a cross-cultural teller.

As fate would have it, my family is moving to Minnesota and I had to change plans and figure out how to graduate! That is when a bell went off in my head and I remembered the dramaturgy that I have been learning in the past few years as part of my Performance Studies degree. As I proceeded through the MAST program I began assisting Dr. Jane Barnette in dramaturgy. As her graduate research assistant, I acted as dramaturg for her adaptation of Red Badge of Courage, produced at Kennesaw State University and Seven Stages Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. It so happens that the University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD) will be mounting a production of Kurt Weill’s Street Scene in the spring of 2015. I moved into action to make that production the project for my capstone, realizing that Street Scene is a cultural story much like Harris’ Br’er Rabbit stories. It occurred to me that I could help in the cross-cultural telling, of Rice’s story and graduate at the same time.
Street Scene was originally a play by Elmer Rice premiering on Broadway in 1928. Kurt Weill later joined with Rice and Langston Hughes to collaborate on the “American Opera” of the same name. With Rice writing the book, Weill the music and Hughes the lyrics, Street Scene opened again as a musical on Broadway in 1946. The action revolves around a multicultural group of tenants in a mid-rise tenement in New York City. The entire action takes place in front of the building as if the audience is just across the street. From the American Studies perspective, it was the scenario of this play that attracted me.

As faculty dramaturg at UMD, Jenna Soleo-Shanks, will graciously allow me to act as dramaturg for this production. The director of the show will be from the music department at UMD. They have ask me to perform the following duties as dramaturg:

• Prepare an online casebook to include a glossary and research material for cast, crew and designers, using the Moodle template (KSU’s equivalent to D2L).
• Participate in Production meetings.
• Participate in rehearsals as needed.
• Present a dramaturgical presentation at the first production meeting and first rehearsal.
• Write dramaturgical notes for the Playbill.
• Create a lobby display.
• Prepare and lead audience talkbacks per the direction of the director.
In addition to the above: for presentation purposes to faculty of both campuses and defending of this project, I propose a website or wiki site that will be comprised of:

- Glossary and casebook
- Photography of lobby display
- Notes taken in Production meeting/rehearsals
- A Journal of the experience
- A reflection of the process.

**Methodology**

Why this play now? Chemers and other scholars have stressed the fact that this question should be the first question asked by any dramaturg. Why this play now? *Street Scene* was chosen before my taking it on as a project, and I was not privileged to hear any discussion that took place in the selection process at UMD. Any play chosen for a production should have some relevance to a modern audience as well as the theatre presenting. What themes will be portrayed; what lessons are to be learned; and what will be carried home by the audience as inspiration for thought and contemplation? Why should UMD do this show at this particular time? I do not know how the selection committee at UMD answered these questions. I will thus have to determine, with the help of the director’s vision and the input of the collaborative team in early production meetings, the answers to the question “Why
this play now?” Using that answer, will guide my research to best answer that question for the production.

My research will include historiography of the time period. An interesting question, already in discussion by the production team, involves the time in which the play is set. The original play was written and set in 1928 and the 1946 musical version was set in 1946. The worldview between 1928 and 1946 was much different having progressed through the great depression and World War II. Discussions between the director and design staff have concluded that UMD will keep the date of the production in 1946. This choice will guide much of my historical research.

My research will also involve production history. Did the creative team in 1946 make a conscience decision to update the time period from 1928? How have other theatres and opera companies dealt with the time period issues? What did critics say about the show? Are there program notes from other production dramaturgs available for clues? These kinds of enquiries may not alter the course of our production at UMD but it may shine a light on problem areas, or offer solutions to puzzles.

The immigrant experience is a research component that will affect cast, designers and the director. The tenement building of the play is full of cultures from around the world. It will be my job to guide the actors to relationships between cultures and within cultures of the time. What world events might be of importance? Rice, the author, believed that the tenement building itself was a character in the play. How can this production interpret this sense of place? This American Place.
Research for the show will be free flowing, in the sense that I will be available to the production team to research questions that arise during rehearsals. With the help of the PBworks wiki pages I will be able to find and post for everyone, answers for any questions that arise. Questions can be presented to me in person while at rehearsal, on the wiki site, through the stage managers rehearsal reports or production meeting reports. The production casebook and glossary will not be presented in paper form but will be presented electronically on the PBworks wiki site. I will post there: historic research, production research, a glossary, design sketches, inspirational images, cast blogs, and if the director and stage manager wish, notes and rehearsal reports can be posted there also. Program notes will come from the research done prior to the deadline and will be guided by the director’s focus and a consensual agreement on what will be most important for an audience to know prior to the show. The Length and amount of detail will be determined by the space allotment offered by the public relations personnel in the program. Talk Backs will work in much the same way, the director may or may not want to have input but if offered I will prepare my topics for discussion with her preferences in mind.

The Lobby display is tantamount to the presentation of my research. Here is where I can relay my findings of the immigrant experience in 1946; the production history; and the inspirational design elements of the show. This display will need to be museum quality work. This is where I will tell the audience why this play is important now!
I write this proposal on the same evening that President Obama announced his use of Presidential power to reform Immigration laws. He said:

For more than 200 years, our tradition of welcoming immigrants from around the world has given us a tremendous advantage over other nations. It's kept us youthful, dynamic, and entrepreneurial. It has shaped our character as a people with limitless possibilities -- people not trapped by our past, but able to remake ourselves as we choose.

Also on this eve, a national treasure, a performer who has portrayed a family man and father figure to generations, has been accused in the news media and tabloids of sexual violence. The news from headlines today and the headlines from a 1928 or a 1946 tenement house in New York City, are far too close in nature to assume they have nothing in common. It is the commonalities that we will find in the Production of Street Scene that will teach us a thing or two about our contemporary lives and how to live them in our new globalized world.
DRAMATURGY: KURT WEILL’S STREET SCENE: AN AMERICAN OPERA AND THE AMERICAN IMMIGRANT’S EXPERIENCE

A Thesis
Presented to
The Academic Faculty

By

Robert Hadaway

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirement for the Degree
Master of Arts in American Studies

Kennesaw State University
May 2015
The Reflection: Dramaturgy of a University Production of Kurt Weill’s *Street Scene: An American Opera*

I. Introduction

The production of Kurt Weill’s *Street Scene* at the University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD) was the last place I thought I would find a capstone project. A decision to move my family to Duluth, Minnesota could have been the end to the completion of the American Studies Master’s Degree that I had worked so hard for, but I could not let that happen. It was my past work with mentor Dr. Jane Barnette, previously with Kennesaw State University (KSU), and now at Kansas State University, that led me to explore dramaturgy as a final thesis project. As I was looking at the Theatre Department’s season at UMD, *Street Scene: An American Opera*,43 with music by composer Kurt Weill, book by playwright Elmer Rice and lyrics by poet Langston Hughes peeked my interest as perfect subject matter for a dramaturgical project in an American Studies discipline. I finished my course work at KSU and arranged with UMD to act as dramaturg for their production of *Street Scene: an American Opera* as the thesis project to finish the degree. The opera is based on Elmer Rice’s play, *Street Scene*, which looks at the inhabitants of a tenement building in New York City where the opera is also set. The lacing of cultures, political beliefs, and interactions between the tenants of the building attracted me almost immediately to the show and it’s subject matter for this

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project. This paper reflects on the project as an analysis of the show and of the educational experience as an academic dramaturg.

Dramaturgy is a modern theatre position that is, although slowly, becoming recognized and utilized by contemporary theatre artist. Theatre scholars and practitioners of the theatre are grappling with the definition and concurrently with the job description of the dramaturg, while educational institutions are slowly beginning to train scholar artist in the application of dramaturgy, even with the loosely agreed upon designation of what and how a dramaturg is to perform in the position. From the academic perspective, it has been my experience that the success or failure of a dramaturg, whether they be guest artist, faculty or students, hinges on faculty members and especially faculty directors appreciating and using dramaturgs in a way that allows the productions dramaturg to become a viable, working member of the production team. Many academic directors, as well as theatre directors working in the field, significantly undervalue the skills and services that a dramaturg can offer a production. This becomes an almost overwhelming challenge for new dramaturgs, when the producing academic theatre department offers dramaturgical training, while directors within the same department seem to ignore the student dramaturg, as if said directors have no true sense of what a dramaturg is to a production. If this seems a conundrum, it is a correct assumption. It is my hope that the dramaturgical work I have done with this project will advance dramaturgy within the UMD faculty and student production team. It is also my hope that they will better see the usefulness and in the future better utilize the services and knowledge of a dramaturg. If we, as scholarly artist,
want to progress the role of the production dramaturg, there has to be education for students and faculty alike.

As a guest artist at UMD, I was asked to prepare dramaturgical program notes; present a lobby display based on my dramaturgical research; be available to both the production team and cast for research help; to conduct talkbacks with the audiences post performances, at the discretion of the director; prepare a casebook which would include a glossary of unfamiliar terms and phrases; and attend production meetings and rehearsals as needed and/or able. These tasks were completed and valued by the production team, none without trials, most with great success. Looking now at the final product I can say that I did educate and enlighten a number of students, faculty and audience members.

II. Production History

*Street Scene* began its life in 1928 when it opened on Broadway at the Playhouse Theatre in New York City. Written by Elmer Rice, *Street Scene* would win the 1929 Pulitzer Prize for drama. Rice would have a hard time finding backers to finance the show, so he would pay most of the cost from his own pocket. When George Cukor, whom Rice had hired to direct the play, walked away from the project, Rice directed the production himself; he had never directed before. To his surprise, Rice’s play was a hit and ran for over 600 performances. 

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Several years later Kurt Weill would see a production of *Street Scene* in Germany that he found most profoundly American. Weill fled Germany after harassment from the Nazi party; the Nazis believed that American jazz influenced his music, to a dangerous level. His work entitled *Die Dreigroschenoper* in 1938 was termed by the National Socialist as the ‘epitome of degenerate art.’ Shortly thereafter he moved to France for only a short time before immigrating to America.45

In the late 1930s while enjoying the success of his *Knickerbocker Holiday’s* Broadway run, Weill met Elmer Rice and proposed a new musical production of *Street Scene*. Weill had dreamed of writing an opera for the Broadway audience and felt that *Street Scene* was a perfect vehicle. Rice turned Weill down, but this did not deter Weill. He would write later that:

“It was a simple story of everyday life in a big city, a story of love and passion and greed and death. I saw great musical possibilities in its theatrical devise—life in a tenement building between one evening and the next afternoon. And it seemed like a great challenge to me to find the inherent poetry in these people and to blend my music with the stark realism of the play.”46

In 1945, Weill approached Rice again, at a time when both men were in search of projects. This time Rice reluctantly accepted. Rice was very protective of his work and his guarding of it would later caused many riffs within the production. At


Rice’s insistence, many blocks of text are lifted directly from the play and into the musical.

Once Rice was onboard with the project a lyricist had to be found. In Rice’s autobiography he claims that it was he who had the idea to ask Langston Hughes to put lyrics to his story. Weill also claimed that it was his idea to ask the noted Harlem Renaissance poet to write lyrics for his music. Whoever it was, Rice or Weill, Hughes had no trouble accepting the lyricist role, although he had never written lyrics for the Broadway stage.  

III. Pre-production

After being accepted as dramaturg by the Theatre Department Chair and the faculty Dramaturg at UMD, I was put in contact with the Director of Street Scene. A member of the Music Department faculty she had directed and performed in opera both here and in Germany for many years. This was concerning because of the difficulty theatre directors have understanding a dramaturg’s role; an opera director would certainly have a more difficult time. Assurance came with the fact that she had worked with a dramaturg previously and that she was excited to have me as a part of the production team. The faculty Dramaturg on staff at UMD, acting as one of my faculty committee members for this project, also assured me that all

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48 I will continue to shorten the title to *Street Scene* for the remainder of this paper. From this point on, if I refer to Rice’s original 1928 play “Street Scene,” I will make note of it.
would be fine and that it would be a learning experience for both the director and myself.

The first conversation as a production team concerns the time period in which the production will be set. The original play was written and opened on Broadway in 1928, just before the Great Depression; set in a New York that was beginning to blend earlier culturally segregated neighborhoods from the great immigration surges of the late 1800s until the 1920s. Rice gives no year for the time setting in the script of his original play, and it can only be assumed that it is set in the current time of the writing: 1928. This time setting and the worldview of that period was a part of what made the show a success; it rang true to the spirit of New York City at the time.

Weill's musical version opened on Broadway in 1947 almost 20 years later. Between the penning of the two productions there were a great many events to change the worldviews of the late 1920s and the 1940s: The Great Depression and World War II being the most transforming. The opera, written in 1947, like the original play, gives no specific date for the time setting, yet it has references within the book and lyrics that point to a 1940’s date. Setting the musical in the 1940s most certainly could have been a part of the lesser success for the Weill production; my research led me to believe that the American worldview was optimistic and confident after the World War, nothing like the worldview in 1928, reducing the power of the play for the more contemporary audiences in 1947.

For this reason, early in the production process, I brought up the question about the time setting to be used in the UMD production. I wanted the director to
explore setting the show in a pre-World War II date. The director and the costume
designer thought that the late thirties were a great time for the fashion, so they ask
me if 1937 might be a viable alternative to the 1928 or 1947 dates. There had to be
more reason for selecting a time period than “the fashions of the late 1930s were
nice;” I tried to guide the team to a consensus that would give the production a
stronger reason to be set in 1937. As the dramaturg, I was concerned over the
American worldview and offered that 1937 could work due to the country going
through the dismal depression and its slow recovery. The oppression of that time
period would work to emphasize the cultural conflicts and tension. Since 1928 had
been quickly eliminated because of the references in the 1947 book and lyrics,
through script analysis and research it was decided that 1937 could be a viable
time setting for the production without alternating references to examples such as:
the A-bomb, Tarzan, Donald Duck and a jitterbug dance number. The importance
was stressed, of making sure everything was at least plausible to the viewing
audience. Donald Duck first appeared in 1934 in a short The Wise Little Hen;\(^\text{49}\) and
while the A-bomb had not been used in 1937, it was possible for a science fiction
fan to have known the term and used it in 1937 as early science fiction writers were
referencing it in writings due to rumors of its development circulating through the
science community; also jitterbug and swing dancing were gaining popularity by
this time.

\(^{49}\) Internet Movie Date Base. “Biography of Donald Duck (Character).”
18, 2015).
I would be remiss if I did not express here my concerns that the Production team seemed to have little concern for the American Worldview and the cultural tensions involved within this show. It would have been a terrible oversight not to stress the political and social undertow of the residents of the tenement building in Street Scene. I consider it my first success as the dramaturg for this production that I could interject a research based solution to a time period and suggest some sense of what was going on in the world around these characters and the action of the play. While it may seem a small dramaturgical change, 1928 or 1947 or 1937, the choice of year in the 20-year spread of dates had a large influence on the final production. I feel confident that the production had a better outcome because of the discussion I proposed.

Michael Mark Chemers, an associate professor of Theater Arts at the University of California- Santa Cruz, and author of Ghost Light: an introductory handbook for Dramaturgy, suggests that the dramaturge’s master question, and ultimately the master question for a theatrical production is “Why this play now?” To make an aesthetically valid piece of theater, the audience and the artist alike must find relevance in, and be stimulated by the piece. So I asked in the very first set of pre-production emails: “Why this play now, why was the decision to produce Street Scene made?” To my surprise there was no answer. Like so many academic theatre seasons, shows are produced “because there is a large cast and we can use a lot of students,” or “because we needed to do an Opera and it seemed we had the

talent to do this one;” or any other of a long list of reasons unrelated to the play or the connection it might have to the artists and audience.

In my thoughts and early analysis of the play I realized that Rice and Weill are exploring the early globalization of America. I surmised that the themes presented in the play are very much relatable to an audience in 2015. Immigration, socialism, capitalism, racism, exploitation in the media, family values, and the freedom and comfort to love and marry whom ever one chooses, are themes presented in Street Scene, and themes Americans are still grappling with today. This play is as relevant as it would have been in 1937, we American’s have just found our way out of a severe recession, war and terrorist threats loom close, our border’s, particularly to the south, are largely unpatrolled and open; while many states argue over gay American’s rights to marriage. Rice stresses anti-Semitism in his play when the young couple composed of gentile Rose Maurant and Jewish Sam Kaplan are parted by Rose’s boss and suitor Mr. Easter, a blatant reference to the Christian cenotaph. Sam’s Mother also tries to intervene, urging Rose to go with Easter and leave Sam alone: “Anyhow, it’s better to marry with your own kind. You can’t mix oil and water.” Themes in Street Scene reverberate and echo themes of contemporary American life making it as relevant now, as when Rice first wrote his play in 1928. The UMD production team was fixed on the world of this play being a prison that no one could escape from. While this theme is valid, it is certainly not the only, nor necessarily the best theme to dwell on.

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I was very aware of the multi-cultural environment that is presented in the script. Rice set the tenement building in isolation; a dilapidated warehouse building on one side and a demolition in progress on the other. This makes the building an island unto itself. My analysis of this isolation is that the building is a metaphor; America is an island unto itself. The playwright suggests that the globalization and mixing of the many cultures in one building, is a part of American exceptionalism. Both World War I and World War II were fought on other lands, leaving America in isolation while battles with enemies occurred across both the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans. This began a period of the American belief that war would not occur on U.S. soil. That period ended with the terroristic happenings of 9/11; no longer is America isolated from its enemies.

**IV. Production Meetings**

In late December 2014 UMD's *Street Scene* production meetings began. I was prepared to give a presentation on my dramaturgical process at the first meeting but was denied the opportunity, as other members of the production team overpowered the conversation, thus forbidding me to speak even to introduce myself; my place on the agenda was ignored. I had to, for the first time in my dramaturgical experience, hold in the anger and disappointment while realizing that a dramaturg is sometimes pushed aside; I should wait until called on to offer my services. My faculty advisor calmed me, reminding me that I would need to wait to be useful as the production called for my service. After the successful time period
discussion, I had to humble myself and wait until I would be acknowledged and employed by the production team once again.

The design conversations began as the set and costume preliminary sketches were presented. Costumes were very realistic and true to the period. The set was also very realistic. But questions of the budget arose for the set design and revisions would have to be made so construction cost would be minimized. Subsequent sketches over the next few weeks became more and more surrealistic. The director insisted that it was appropriate; that the Salvador Daliesque melting set looked like it was melting from the August heat in New York City. I reminded the production team that Rice had searched high and low for a tenement building that fit the look he wanted at 25 w. 65th Street in New York. I also suggested to the team to consider Weill’s desire to present something in realism, his past writing effort had been, most recently at the time, surrealistic in aesthetics and earlier with Brecht in his Epic Theatre style. Both of these men, Rice and Weill, felt that realism was appropriate and necessary for this piece. Street scene is a place-based piece of art and realism seems the obvious choice. Much to my bewilderment the costume design was remaining in realism to the period as the set design became angular and surrealistic. My suggestion, with the support of the light designer and Chair of the Theatre Department, was that a concept had to follow through the

52 The first musical number in the show is “Ain’t it Awful, the Heat?”
53 Rice. 244.
54 Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht collaborated on the Three Penny Opera, and Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny. Brecht is known to have modernized dramaturgy, using researchers to work for months on a production, making sure every detail of the production was correct and documented.
whole design for the show. We would soon realize this was a battle that we would not win and it was decided that the set would have touches of a Salvador Dali melting effects, while costumes, lights, and props would remain in realism. The question of “Why?” remained unanswered.

While these disappointments in my influence as a dramaturg were distressing, I had to remind myself that the job of dramaturgs is a challenging one and that my influence would not always sway a production teams decisions. If nothing else, I found fulfillment in asking the questions that prompted the team to examine the choices that were being made.

**V. Rehearsals**

Unlike the first production meeting, I did have the opportunity to present my dramaturgy to the cast at the first rehearsal. Offering assistance with any character research, I then presented the PBworks website,\(^{55}\) a platform that I had used with Dr. Barnette in earlier projects. The Pbworks site takes the place of a hardcopy casebook and is more accessible to everyone at any time. I stressed that the site was for all to enjoy, each character had a page on which actors could post their individual research. I earlier posted much of my research and anything I could find that might be useful to the production. There is a page of glossary terms; definitions of words and phrases that might not be widely known. There is a page for production history including reviews of original productions and others that

\(^{55}\) Umdstreetscene.pbworks.com. Permission must be acquired to enter this site.
followed. I posted scholarly articles, reviews and a bibliography of book sources that I felt would be helpful. The designers posted sketches of costumes and the set so that cast could refer to them throughout the rehearsal process. Finally, in an effort to inform the cast of worldviews, I posted American and world events that occurred before the summer of 1937. I included basic history events but also popular films, literature and music of the time period. I was hopeful that they would review and study the site; realizing that this information would, or could, affect their performances.

The reaction of the cast at that first rehearsal was promising yet fleeting. When presented with the notion that the PBworks site would be a record of their production, they all lit up with curiosity. I was pleased that almost every cast member went and explored the site at least once. My faculty advisor had warned me to keep the material light and not overwhelm students who might shy away if the information was dense and heavy with scholarly writing so my postings were basic in scope and content. But the minority of students returned to the site more than a few times and none posted anything to either general pages or their character pages. It is understood that theatre students are some of the most overworked scholars in the university system, much like athletes, and when in a production, rehearsing every night and studying when they can find an extra hour leaves little time to contribute to a dramaturgical site. Yet I have seen this type of site work in the past. Every person involved in a theatrical production must do

56 I found little peer reviewed scholarly writing on Street Scene. Most of the conversation on the show itself has been through critiques and criticism of the show in such trade magazines as Opera Now and Opera Times.
research to understand and contribute to the world of the play; these types of sights as a research tool can greatly improve the production as a way of sharing the research being done. As I have discussed in earlier writings, scholars agree that dramaturgical research is going to happen, whether or not a dramaturg is employed. In the overworked academic world a dramaturg's service, as a researcher alone, should be cultivated to relieve production pressures.

As a dramaturgical assistant to Dr. Barnette during a production of *Elephant’s Graveyard* at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama; and as dramaturg for Dr. Barnette’s adaptation of *Red Badge of Courage* that she co-wrote and directed with Michael Haverty at Kennesaw State University and Seven Stages Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia, student actors were highly involved in recording their experience with blog pages and sharing research and images that they found along the creative journey of the productions. Dr. Barnette, being an excellent dramaturg herself, instilled in actors and production teams, the collaborative value of not only the artistic vision of the production, but also the collaborative research that could enhance the vision of that production. The *Red Badge of Courage* designers, musicians, and actors all contributed to the Pbworks site with photographs, videos, design sketches, inspirational images, reflections on civil war site visits and veteran guest speakers, as well as actor blogs both on the actors process and their character’s bio and research. When Auburn University produced the production in the fall of 2015, I was ask to share the PB works site with that group of artist and they built upon the site to expand the research and continue the use of the *Red Badge of Courage* site.
This kind of dramaturgical involvement did not happen during UMD’s production of *Street Scene*. As a guest dramaturg I was a stranger, not a faculty member respected by the students from past productions or the classroom. In reflection, it would have been more successful if I had have had the faculty production team’s support. But this casebook in the form of a website was new to the faculty also and I believe given the chance to dramaturg at UMD in the future this form of research sharing will be embraced to a much fuller extent. As the dramaturg I have planted seeds for future UMD production procedures and I have personally gained some trust in the procedures that I have to share.

**VI. Program notes**

Program notes are a dramaturge’s direct conversation with the audience. Notes are a personal expression and in some cases the only time in a production that the dramaturg is heard. What is discussed in these notes is dictated by the dramaturg of course, but also by the director, who may have notes in the program as well; there is no need for a dramaturg to repeat what a director is addressing in their notes. The theatre’s public relations or marketing department may also want certain things presented in the notes, or as I found, notes of a specific length to fit an allotted space in the playbill. Program notes can easily become cumbersome and laden with academic jargon in a university setting. If an audience is going to read them, and they often don’t, the notes must be enjoyable, informative, and written at the audiences level. There is some debate as to what a dramaturg should reveal
about the play before hand. Norman Frisch and Marianne Weems discuss this briefly in “Dramaturgy on the Road To Immortality: Inside the Wooster Group;” an article included in Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book. Frisch explains the hours spent on a production, The Temptation of St. Anthony:

“Constructing program notes that would give the audience some handle on what was going on on stage. It was a constant point of tension between Liz (a director at the Wooster Group) and myself, because Liz's tendency is not to want to give the Audience anything useful—or rather, to deliberately give them information that is un-useful.”

It is illogical to alienate the audience to which the art is being performed. It seems only fair that a dramaturg stand as an ally between the production and the audience. There is a delicate balance that must be performed; what information is valuable to an audiences enjoyment of the piece and what information will leave no room for an audience members ability to interpret the production and form his or her own analysis. We as theatre artist must not spoon-feed our audiences, they tend to be smart people, and we must challenge their intellects and trust that they will engage in the stories that we tell.

Street Scene's Director asked that I focus on the production history for my notes. This seemed wise, when the notes were due in January for a production going up in May, and before the production really had time to settle into a concept, in fact at that time we had just settled on the 1937 time period. It was very early to

know where the show concept might veer off course or change completely. Indeed, if I had written in the notes about Weill’s great need and battle for realism, I would not have been able to discuss or explain the surrealistic set that was yet to come.

Below is my draft of the program notes:

Street Scene: an American Opera
Dramaturgical Notes
Robert Hadaway

Welcome to Hell’s Kitchen! In 1928, Elmer Rice walked the streets of this New York City neighborhood in search of the perfect tenement house to inspire the Broadway production of Street Scene, his Pulitzer Prize winning play, which he also directed. He presented to the designers 25 West 65th Street: “A house that completely answered my description.” On the far upper edges of Hell’s Kitchen, the neighborhood was once an enclave of lower and working class Irish and Italian families. In the 1930s and 1940s Hell’s Kitchen became more diverse, even after the prohibition era sparked a gang ridden, mob ruled atmosphere. Hell’s Kitchen: a gritty New York neighborhood is where we find our production of Street Scene, which director Alice Pierce, has set in 1937.

Rice, being very protective of his writing, reluctantly gave Kurt Weill permission to set the play to music. Weill’s Street Scene: An American Opera opened on Broadway in 1946. Composer Kurt Weill left Germany in 1933 after being ridiculed by the Nazi party, Weill stated: “my whole musical background is closely related to American Jazz. That’s why the Nazis attacked me so.” Himself an American immigrant, Weill worked in France, Hollywood and for Broadway after fleeing Germany. Best known for his Three Penny Opera, written with Bertolt Brecht in Germany, Weill also penned Knickerbockers’ Holiday and Lost in the Stars with Max Anderson and Lady in the Dark, with Ira Gershwin, for

58 Rice, Elmer. 244.

59 Sanders. 350-351.
Perhaps it was Weill’s own emigration to America that drew him to compose for this multi-cultural immigrant’s world that Rice had created for the stage.

It is unclear whose idea it was to recruit Langston Hughes, the “Jazz poet”, infamous for his role in the Harlem Renaissance, to write the lyrics for the musical version of Street Scene. Rice claims, in his autobiography, that it was himself. Other accounts suggest it was Weill’s idea, to compliment his jazz and blues influences that would come to the Street Scene score. In any view, it was a perfect match that Rice a second generation German immigrant who was born in a New York tenement, Kurt Weill, a Jewish immigrant fleeing the threatening Nazi party, and Hughes, an African-American in a race troubled nation, came together to create a piece of American Opera centered around a tenement building full of Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, African-American, Swedish, German, Italian, and Irish cultures.

While it is heavy on production history, I hope that it will peak the interest of those audience members who read the notes. If I have peaked their curiosity, perhaps they will enjoy the lobby display at intermission or after the show.

**VII. Lobby Display**

In addition to and as an extension of the program notes, it was requested by the UMD Theatre Department to execute a lobby display. A lobby display must also, like the program notes, be directed to the audience without becoming overwhelming. The audience will be in the lobby only shortly before the performance and again during the intermission. They will only catch snippets of the display, so quick impressions are vital.

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61 Rice. 11.
to the success of a lobby display. Short, easy to read captions and quotations work best accompanied by photographs, to catch attention.

The lobby display provided an opportunity to shine. While other areas of the dramaturgical process were marked with both failures and successes, I was confident from the beginning that I would be successful in executing a museum quality display. It was an area that was totally within my control without word counts or other limits. I was given a small budget and a larger-than-normal area of lobby space than previously allotted for dramaturgical displays. The marketing director who also coordinated the lobby at the university theater, gave her full support to my needs and desires for the display. The Panels, shown below for quick reference are from the larger display, as examples of the work. All of the panels can be found in Appendix II, along with photographs of the larger display. The large posters measure 10”x20” and the smaller 10”x10”. They are mounted on a wall of 5-4’x8’ false brick panels which represented the tenement in which the play is set. The atmosphere of the display needs to reflect the atmosphere of the play. While not a replica of the show or the set design, the display merely suggests the environment created in the theatre’s performance space. There are a total of 20 large posters and 20 small posters. In the larger posters I speak of production history, creators biographies, American events and worldview in early 1937, world leaders and world events of early 1937, and popular American culture. Each rectangular plaque contained information in print and a photograph relating to the information. All placards were printed with a sepia tone as to appear to be old newsprint; I felt this reflected the themes of media and its role in the events of the play. The quotes on the smaller posters came from a
wide array of 20th century public figures including: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Tony Blair, Tony Kushner, Lyndon Johnson, Margret Mitchell and others. Most of the quotes pertained to immigration and its many reflections through out the 20th century, others were quotes that related directly to the information that the poster was expressing. One of the challenges in the display was the placement of the quotes in relationship to the larger poster, as each large poster had a smaller one in conjunction. Much of the information was drawn from the postings of the Pbworks site. This allowed the audience to share in some of the information that the cast received while in rehearsal for the show.
Kurt Weill

Kurt Weill was born in 1900.

By the 1920’s he was already well respected in Germany as a musician and dramatist.

His early notoriety came from his work with Bertolt Brecht and their most notable musical theatre contributions: *The Three Penny Operet* and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*.

Weill Emigrated to America from Germany in 1933, fleeing harassment from the Nazi Party.

Here he worked both in the New York theatre and Hollywood movies. Other Broadway credits include: *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus*, *Knickerbocker Holiday*

1937 Worldview

The time setting of *Street Scene* is never indicated in either Rice’s original script nor Weill’s musical version. We can only assume Rice set his plot in 1929; at the time it was written.

Weill’s musical adaptation was written in 1947 and included references to that later date. Between the two versions of *Street Scene*, the Great Depression and World War II occur, changing the American worldview deeply.

UMD’s production crew did much research and decided to set this version of *Street Scene* in 1937. After the depression and before the War. It seemed a more fitting time period than after the War when the American mood was more positive.
I was excited by the concept of a large number of different individuals whose behavior and relationships were largely conditioned by their accidental common occupancy of a looming architectural pile.

—Elmer Rice of Street Scene

I have a gentle beef with one of your phrases. Although I was born in Germany, I do not consider myself a ‘German composer.’ The Nazis obviously did not consider me as such either, and I left their country.

—Kurt Well, in a letter to the editor of Life magazine after a feature story about Street Scene in 1947.
One other useful purpose of the lobby display is promotion. As students walk through the theater lobby the display is purposely set up a week and a half before opening for viewing and advertisement. The display also sits adjacent to the box office so community members who come to the UMD campus to purchase tickets will perhaps take the time to enjoy the display. The lobby display is the one most influential aspect of the dramaturgy for *Street Scene*. More comments are made in praise of the lobby display than any other aspect of my dramaturgical work. I received many compliments from the cast and other students; The director was overwhelmed and complimented the effort. The most telling compliment came as the Chair of the Theatre Department called on a faculty Graphic Designer and a representative of the Marketing Department, to explore how future dramaturgical displays could emulate the work.

I made occasion to spend some time in the lobby, before the opening of the show, observing reactions to the display. In my field notes I observed many pedestrians in the lobby stopping to examine. To my surprise many spent a good deal of time reading and absorbing the display. At some points, when there were two or more observers, I would stand at the display myself and listen for honest reactions. “This is really cool” And “This play might be really interesting” were a couple of comments that I heard. To capture a student attention while taking a shortcut through a theatre lobby, and interest him in an opera was by far one of the greatest successes of this project.
VIII. Talkbacks

The most disappointing aspect of the experience with UMD’s production of *Street Scene* is the missed opportunity of post-show talkbacks. The talkbacks were at the discretion of the director and she refused to even discuss the possibility of a conversation with cast and audiences after any performance. Talkbacks are very enjoyable to me both as an audience member and an artist. As an audience member I get to inquire about process, and question concepts and themes that were either focused on or ignored by the production. As an artist, talkbacks are invaluable as reflections as to what an audience saw and heard. The audience’s interpretation can give very useful information as to how the work was received, giving data as to what was artistically successful or where communication may have broken down between artist and audience.

Before the show opened I was pleased to be invited to an opera appreciation class that is a part of the continuing education program at UMD. Some actors sang from the show and I got to talk about the dramaturgy. There were many questions concerning the show and history of the period. I wish that I could go back and talk to the class after they had seen the performance. The data collected there would shine light on the performance of the dramaturgy.

Conclusion

The American Studies program, along with the play analysis skills that I have learned over the years, has made me a much better dramaturg. *Street Scene* is an
almost perfect modern Aristotelian play. It encompasses unity of time, taking place within a 24 hour period; unity of place, as all the action takes place in front of the tenement building; and while there are subplots, and a plethora of actions on the New York street, most of the action revolves around the Maurant family completing, at least in part, the unity of action. Rice believed that the tenement building itself was a character in his play. He explains his thoughts:

“The house was much more than a background; it was an integral part of the play. It might almost be said that it was the play...I was excited by the concept of a large number of diverse individuals whose behavior and relationships were largely conditioned by their accidental common occupancy of a looming architectural pile.”

How could this production have better interpreted this sense of place; this American place? Rice certainly used the unity of time to suggest the circular repetition of life in the building; and he used the scenery to isolate the building for our closer inspection. Yi-Fu Tuan, in his book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* states: “Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other. There is no place like home. What is home? It is the old homestead, the old neighborhood, hometown or motherland.” Rice understood this sense of space and place long before Tuan wrote his excellent tome. In the dramaturgy for *Street Scene*, through the lens of an American Studies student, I longed to impart the importance of this place to each actor’s character. I wanted to ask: What did the building, the city, the individual apartment mean to each character in the context of this play? The details of the place called Hell’s Kitchen in

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62 Rice. 237.
63 Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977. 3
New York City, which these immigrants experienced both as individuals and in their collective memories, were there for student actors to give this theatre piece life, and warmth, and heart. My research into the neighborhood, the city, America and the condition of the world in 1937 all contributed to the life of the play and gave it a better sense of the world of the play.

The many themes and motifs involved in and around this play made it difficult to know which to focus on in my work. I wanted to convey the importance of exploring the Marxist theories, socialism and racism in this show. There was a great opportunity to teach about globalization and American immigrants, and most certainly the multi-culturalism. The exploration of American exceptionalism and the cultural hegemony so prevalent in this piece of theatre needed a voice. Many of these themes, in the customary frantic rehearsal period were left unaddressed. As the dramaturg for this production, I leave feeling that I could have said so much more about these themes, to help the pulse of the play become stronger and healthier. But I realize that I did keep that pulse alive. I did contribute to a better production; my being there and asking ‘Why this play now?’ every time I needed to research a question, influenced how I would answer those questions. This influence thus reflected my answers to the ‘Why now?’ question that dramaturgs need to ask most often, and why I felt that this American play has relevance now, just as it did when Rice’s show was a Broadway hit in 1928.

Now in hindsight, the production has seen it’s final performance. The lobby display has been taken down along with the surrealistic angular set. The cast has left campus for the summer break, while I reflect and
realize that indeed I made a great contribution to this Production. As I was constructing the lobby display several students were amazed at what I had done, realizing a missed opportunity to use my research. Shortly before opening, hits on the PBworks site spiked. I become conscious that some students were realizing only then, why I was there and wishing that they had used me a bit more. One student requested to be invited to the PBworks site only days before opening; she had ignored the invitation to join the site earlier in the semester. These are seeds that will grow, and in the future when students have a dramaturg, they will be more willing to use that dramaturg. Faculty, in the future, will better trust and rely on my research, or rely on a student’s dramaturgical research in an upcoming production. That is the seed that I have planted with my successes here, and hopefully as students of dramaturgy and directors learn together how to best use dramaturgs, it will continue to grow and thrive.
Bibliography


Appendix I

The following are the syllabi that were considered for comparison in the Literature Review:

TPS 3500: Dramaturgy
Kennesaw State University
Spring 2008. MW 12:30—1:45pm
Wilson Building 225

Professor: Jane Barnett, Ph.D. (WB 223)
email: jbarrett@kennesaw.edu
Office Hours: TR 12:30-1:45 and by appointment

Required Texts:
- Or Before the Rain by Mark Ferris Swartz (Johns Hopkins, 2000)
- The New Century Handbook by Christine A. Holt & Thomas N. Hieck
- Theatre Topics vol 13, no. 1 (March 2003): Special Issue on Dramaturgy (Available electronically)

Course Description (from Catalogue, p. 406): "Close study of performance texts and source material, with an emphasis on dramaturgical practice, including an overview of the history of the dramaturg.

Course Objectives:
- to identify and critically analyze the role of the Dramaturg in various settings
- to analyze performance texts and source materials for their historic and production values
- to apply dramaturgical skills to non-traditional (or non-theatrical) settings
- to contextualize Western theatre performance traditions within an international scope
- to cultivate an understanding of the politics that go into every performance event
- to present dramaturgical research through written, visual, and oral communication

Learning Outcomes:
- Students will identify, describe, and perform a variety of production processes related to Theatre & Performance Studies.
- Students will demonstrate professional work habits, etiquette, and collaborative skills appropriate to the discipline.
- Students will use performance as a mode of inquiry, method of analysis, and creative act.
- Students will apply textual analysis to performance and/or production.
- Students will practice ethical representation of others.
- Students will think critically and conceptually about texts, performance, and production.
- Students will speak and write clearly and effectively and communicate with precision, cogency, and rhetorical force.
- Students will conduct, communicate, and cite research in a manner consistent with scholarly discourse.
- Students will use performance to build intercultural and interdisciplinary alliances within the campus and wider communities.

GRADING BREAKDOWN
Each student’s final grade for the class will be determined by dividing the total number of points earned over the course of the semester by 1000 (the total possible points). Grades will not be automatically rounded up to the next highest point or letter value. Final grades may be raised if and only if the student meets all of the following criteria: 1) The final grade is less than five points away from the next grade level; 2) Weekly improvement has been shown throughout the semester; and 3) All assignments were completed and turned in on time, & all quizzes were taken and passed.

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<td>Peer Work</td>
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TOTAL 1000 Points 100%
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• Attendance Policy: Regular attendance is required and students are responsible for any material discussed in class. You are allowed to miss up to two classes without penalty. Absences occurring after this quota has been met will cost points off the student’s final grade (see chart below). Exceptions are made for absences caused by official university business only. Students absent on a day when quizzes are scheduled, due, or given will not be allowed to make it up without providing proper documentation excusing their absence.

  0-2 absences = 100 points
  3 absences = 80 points
  4 absences = 70 points
  5 absences = 60 points
  6 absences = 30 points
  7 absences or more = 0 points

All absences (except official university business) are considered UNEXCUSED. This policy includes all personal illnesses, deaths in the family, and so on. Should extended illness or other personal crises create excessive absences for you this semester, you are advised to drop the course. Students arriving 15 minutes or later to the class are considered absent for that day. Two “tardies” equal one absence, so if you are consistently late, it will negatively affect your grade. It is your responsibility to verify my attendance list— if you are tardy, check to see that I counted you present that day. (10% of final grade)

• Social Contract/Participation: All students are expected to participate actively in the community of this course—in other words, each student should read the assigned material (often, more than twice) before class begins, contribute to class discussion in ways that are constructive to his/her fellow colleagues, and to demonstrate openly his/her learning process with the material. This will be a challenging course, and therefore it necessitates a positive attitude from each student. The choice not to contribute to class discussions or to foster a negative classroom environment will detract from a student’s final grade. (10% of final grade)

• The Oz Project: To better understand the work of a dramaturg, each student will research and gather written and visual information about a particular adaptation of The Wizard of Oz story, which will culminate in a five-minute pitch given during the Final Examination period (5/6-8, 12:30-2:30pm). See Appendix for Details, Deadlines, and Strategies for each of the four parts of this major assignment. (10% of final grade)

• Peer Work: Each student will work with another student in class (a peer) to offer constructive feedback on the process of transformation from manuscript to presentation or performance. Peers will be assigned and specific instructions will be distributed regarding this assignment—details forthcoming. (10% of final grade)

• Quizzes: Eleven quizzes will be given over the course of the semester, covering the assigned reading for that class day, as well as any pertinent lecture and/or discussion material from the previous periods. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester. Each quiz is worth up to 30 points and will contain both short-answer and multiple-choice questions. On some occasions, students may be asked to bring a quiz question to class—on others, the quizzes may be take-home short essays. Most often, however, quizzes will be held in class and should be completed within ten minutes or less. (30% of final grade)

• Program Notes: Before beginning in-depth work on the Oz Project, each student will have an opportunity to write the notes for one of two canonical, English-language plays. The program notes will be approximately 500 words (text only) and will include a Works Cited page, formatted according to the current MLA style. For this project, students should cite at least three sources, although they may consult more. (10% of final grade)
COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Departmental Writing Policy:** The Department of Theatre & Performance Studies encourages student development as articulate scholars as well as creative artists. To assist students as emerging scholar-artists, the Department requires the use of MLA style & The New Century Handbook throughout the major.

**Human Relations Statement:** Kennesaw State University is an educational community comprised of individuals from different ethnic, racial and religious groups and of different genders, political beliefs, ages, abilities and sexual orientations. In light of this diversity, KSU is committed to contribute to the development of an integrated, pluralistic society in which individuals model and support humanness and respect for the individual. The University is committed to providing quality education that is enhanced by the perspectives provided by individuals and groups with varying backgrounds and views. Racism, sexism, and other discriminatory attitudes and behaviors impede learning and working. Conversely, respect for differences enhances educational and work experiences. KSU is dedicated to creating an environment that cherishes and nourishes this diversity.

**Codes of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy:** "Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate catalog. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policies on academic honesty. This includes provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement." (Faculty Handbook §3.20)

**Policy on missed quizzes, exams, and late assignments:** Except in cases of documented illness or excused absences, students will NOT be allowed to make up missed quizzes. All make-ups must be completed before the next quiz, and will only be administered when accompanied by written documentation, regardless of the nature of the absence. Please note that in case of illness, weather, car troubles, and overextending are NOT acceptable excuses. Assignments will lose one letter grade per 24 hours late, with the first grade reduction occurring at the end of class on the day it is due.

**Disability Policy:** In accordance with the University policy, if the student has a documented disability and requires accommodations to obtain equal access to this course, he or she should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester and make this need known. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the Office of Disabled Student Services. Please note that this process takes at least one month to complete, thus, students are urged to seek accommodations immediately.

**Religious Holidays:** It is the policy of the University to make every reasonable effort allowing students to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. In such cases, it is the obligation of the student to provide the instructor with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which he or she will be absent. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve the student of responsibility for completing required work missed. Following the necessary verification, the student should consult with the instructor to determine what appropriate alternative opportunity will be provided, allowing the student to fully complete his or her academic responsibilities. Please note: you must notify me of your religious affiliation (should you anticipate absences) by January 21, 2006 (Monday).

**Grade Points Chart:**

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COURSE ITINERARY: FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD... (OZ: Oz Before the Rainbow;
TT: Theatre Topics; DAT: Dramaturgy in American Theater)

Week One-Two: Introductions, Defining Dramaturgy
M 1/7 The Basics: Who/What/Why/Where syllabus
W 1/9 What is Dramaturgy? Brockett (DAT), Wolf (TT)
M 1/14 Directors, Playwrights, and Dramaturgs (oh my!) Shteir, Zelenak (TT)
W 1/16 LMDA and Copyright Overview LMDA handouts

Weeks Three—Five: Practicing Production Dramaturgy
M 1/21 MLK, Jr. DAY: NO CLASS Fefu or Menagerie
W 1/23 The World(s) of the Play(s): Fefu & Menagerie Quiz #1
M 1/28 Questions and Research Your Research
W 1/30 Taking Notes and Finding Quotes Q #2 Your Notes
M 2/4 The Lobby Display Notes DUE Image Research
W 2/6 No Class (ACTF): Watch Wizard of Oz (1939 MGM) Oz (1939 film)

Weeks Six—Seven: L. Frank Baum & The Wizard of Oz
M 2/11 The Wonderful Wizard of Oz & L. Frank Baum Oz (1900 story)
W 2/13 Putting Baum in Context Q #3 OZ 1-24

Fairy Muses by David Lindsay-Abaire (2/12-2/17 @ Studio Theatre)

M 2/18 Baum’s Oz as a Populist Fable David Parker
W 2/20 Creating The Wizard of Oz for the Stage Q #4 OZ 27-38

Week Eight—The Oz Project
M 2/27 The Oz Project Appendix
W 2/27 Present Your Adaptation: Pre-Pitch Adaptation Choice DUE
KSU Dance Company Spring Concert (2/27-2/29 @ Stillwell Theater)

S 3/1 through F 3/7: Spring Break—NO CLASSES!! (Be safe and enjoy it.)

The instructor reserves the right to alter this itinerary at any time during the semester
Weeks Nine—Eleven: Adaptation & Julian Mitchell’s *Wizard of Oz* extravaganza

**M 3/10** The Chicago script

*last day to withdraw without academic penalty*

**W 3/12** The Four Elements & Mitchell’s script

*KSU Spring StoryFest* by KSU Tellers (3/13-3/15 @ Stillwell Theater)

**Q #5 Rudakoff (TT)**

**M 3/17** An Atlanta Dramaturg: Freddie Ashley

*Ashley article*

**W 3/19** The Chicago Production & Tour

**Q #6 OZ 60-98**

**M 3/24** The New York Production

**W 3/26** Contemporary Perspectives on Collaboration

*New Works and Ideas Festival* (3/25-3/30 @ Studio Theater, etc.)

**Q #7 Thomson (TT)**

Week Twelve—Defending Your Adaptation

**M 3/31** Adapting for the Stage

**W 4/2** Peer Workshop on Adaptation

*Adaptation Paper DUE*

**Q #8 TBA (handout)**

Weeks Thirteen—Fourteen: The Film Wizards

**M 4/7** The Early Films (chapters assigned)

**W 4/9** Early Film Debate

*Oz Project Dramaturgy DUE*

**Q #9 OZ 159-238**

**M 4/14** The 1939 MGM Classic

**W 4/16** Catch-Up Day (TBA)

*Moby-Dick*, adapted by John Genville (4/15-4/20 @ Stillwell Theater)

**Q #10 OZ 239-258**

**Peer Work DUE in Class**

Week Fifteen(ish): Wrapping Up with Season Selection

**M 4/21** The Atlanta Theatre World: Consider the Possibilities

*Websites*

**W 4/23** Considering (Offending) the Audience

*Kosidowski (TT)*

**M 4/28** Reading Day: No Class (but Dr. J. has office hours!!)

*work on pitch*

**M 5/5** Final Examination Period (12:30—2:30pm):

*Pitches Given in Class*

*Peer Work DUE in Class*

**T 5/6** *Postmortems DUE* by 12noon (via email)

The instructor reserves the right to alter this itinerary at any time during the semester.
APPENDIX: The Oz Project

This four-part project is designed to simulate the production dramaturg’s process of creation. Taken together, the Oz Project is worth 300 points, or 30% of your final grade.

Part One: The Proposal (due 2/27/08 in class)
• You will have a choice of applying to be the production dramaturg at one of four different theatre companies. To apply, you will write a 4-6 page project proposal, which will argue why you and your Oz adaptation choice are both good matches for this particular company. In order to argue these points effectively, you will want to conduct research on the potential audience/s for your chosen company, as well as the various possibilities for staging The Wizard of Oz. The best arguments will clearly articulate the connection between the company profile and audience composition and the proposed adaptation. The proposals should cite your research in current MLA style. (Worth 75 points)

Four Theatre Companies:
1. Booker T. Washington HS in Dallas, TX
   a. an arts-magnet high school in an inner-city setting
2. UT-Austin’s Dept. of Theatre & Dance
   a. a public university with cutting-edge programming
3. Zachary Scott Theatre in Austin, TX
   a. a LORT theatre in a metropolitan community
4. Salvage Vanguard Theater
   a. a young, hip, upstart theatre company

Part Two: The Dramaturgy (due 4/9/08 in class)
• Based on the company who hires you, you will be asked to complete one of three possible dramaturgical outcomes: program notes, a website, or a study guide. This dramaturgy should showcase your research and vision. Details for each possible outcome are forthcoming and will differ slightly for each student based on your assignment. All dramaturgy, regardless of assignment, should include images and music, as well as writing and research. You will be required to cite at least 5 sources and consult at least 7 others, using current MLA style. (Worth 100 points)

Part Three: The Pitch (given 5/5/08 in class)
• Each student will write and perform a 3-5 minute pitch for your project. The pitch should address the adaptation choice, the audience composition, and the specific dramaturgical choices that make your project unique. You will turn in your written speech after giving it in class; pitches that are shorter or longer than the specified time limit will lose points. Pitches must be memorized and must include visual aids. (Worth 75 points)

Part Four: The Postmortem (due 5/6/08 by 12noon)
• After pitching your project, you will write a short (2-4 pp.) postmortem reflection essay. In this essay, you will consider what steps you would have taken differently throughout the process, where you think you succeeded, and where you think you fell short of your (or the professor’s) expectations. You will have an opportunity to evaluate not only your own performance throughout the Oz Project but also your peers’ feedback, in terms of time management, helpfulness, and decorum. (Worth 30 points)
Real-World Elements
• Since in the "real world" of dramaturgy, a dramaturg must navigate the political vicissitudes inherent to creating live performance, on three different occasions during this project you will be presented with extenuating circumstances that you must incorporate into your work. These circumstances may address subjects like funding surprises, events in your community, the director's concept, and/or copyright issues. Encountering these fates will challenge you to adapt to the changing needs of a "real world" theatre company.

Peer Work  (due 4/16/08 in class; 5/5/08 in class)
• Twice over the course of the semester, you will have an opportunity to respond to a peer's work. Your response to your peer will be graded according to its timeliness, relevance, helpfulness, and decorum. Each peer response is worth up to 50 points. Details for each peer response are forthcoming. (Worth a total of 100 points, or 10% of final grade.)

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49:194: DRAMATURGY
The University of Iowa
Fall 2004
TTh 12:30-1:50

Art Borreca
Office: TB 126 (The University of Iowa)
Office Phone and Voice Mail: 353-2401
Theatre Arts Main Office Phone: 335-2700
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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:30; or by appointment

OBJECTIVES

*To develop a knowledge of dramaturgy as a process integral to the creation, development, production, and reception of plays and theatrical performances;

*To develop a knowledge of the history and practice of dramaturgy as a profession that combines specific intellectual and practical skills and functions;

*To gain experience with some of those functions, including but not limited to: research and analysis for productions; conceptualization and adaptation of playtexts; literary management and new play dramaturgy;

*To gain familiarity with how “the dramaturgical approach” can be applied to a variety of social and cultural phenomena.

REQUIRED TEXTS
On order through IMU Bookstore:

Jonas & Prochl, Dramaturgy in American Theatre
Bly, Production Notebooks (Volume 1)
Eagleton, Literary Theory (Recommended)
Aristotle, The Poetics (trans Elise)
Sophocles I (Lattimore & Grene, eds.)
Brecht, The Good Person of Setzuan (Bentley and Manheim/Willett editions)
Condon, The Manchurian Candidate (1958 novel)
Lahr, The Manchurian Candidate (1991 playscript)
UPAC containing Wallace, The Inland Sea (two drafts and published version)
REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

1. Class attendance and participation, including completion of all class exercises in a single Notebook or Portfolio dedicated to the course.

Your Notebook or Portfolio should include all notes on readings, in-class notes, and work on all assigned exercises. This Notebook/Portfolio will be collected and graded twice during the semester: in class on October 14 and at the Final Exam Period on December 16. The grade for your Notebook will reflect your attendance and in-class participation as well as your work on any assigned exercises.

Absentee Policy: You are permitted one unexcused absence during the semester. For each additional unexcused absence, your Notebook/Participation grade will be lowered one-half step (e.g., B+ to B). If you have a good reason why you must be absent from class, please contact the instructor in advance of the class meeting.


The project is described in the Addendum and will be discussed in detail in class. It is due in installments, as described in the Addendum; the Final Protocol is due at the Exam Period on December 16 (see next).

3. A Final Exam, to be taken during the university-assigned Exam Period for this class:
Thursday, December 16, 2:15-4:15 P.M. (place TBA).

This exam will consist of an essay question or questions that ask you to analyze, synthesize, and apply concepts and materials discussed in class. You will be given the question on the last day of class, December 9, and may prepare your answer before the Exam Period using any class texts, notes, etc. You must write your answer to the question during the Final Exam Period (procedure to be discussed in class).

Grading for all course components will be done on an A+/F scale. Each component will be averaged into your Final Grade using the following percentages:

- Attendance/Participation 25%
- Final Exam 25%
- Final Project 50%
PROCEDURES

The course is divided into three parts.

Part I focuses on the history of dramaturgy and its relation to dramatic criticism/theory. Part I will consist primarily of lecture/discussions, discussions of readings, and exercises in dramaturgical analysis.

Part II focuses on such dramaturgical functions as conceptualization, translation, script cutting, and adaptation. Classes will focus on the discussion of exercises and supplementary readings to be completed outside of class.

Part III focuses on new play dramaturgy. Through a combination of readings on new play development and hands-on exercises, we will explore the particular challenges of new play dramaturgy in comparison to dramaturgy with established texts.

Throughout the semester we will also discuss the two recurring topics listed below.

Due dates for all readings and exercises will be announced in class at two week intervals.

RECURRING TOPICS

Dramaturgical Protocols & Research

Readings: Katz 115, Bly 48 (in Jonas and Proehl)

Sessions: Project Ideas, Research Methods/Library Resources

Critical Writing & Dramaturgical Note-taking

Exercises: Reviews and/or dramaturgical notes on the following events (all are required):

The Good Person of Setzuan, October 14-17, 20-24, Mabie Theatre

Muro-Ami by Anton Juan, November 4-7, 10-14, DTT

Any one reading/discussion of the Playwrights Workshop, Mondays, 6:30
I. WHAT IS DRAMATURGY?

The Dramaturg in History

Readings (in Jonas & Proehl):

Schechter (16), Esslin (25), Marks (31), Brustein (33) (all on the history of dramaturgy);

Cattaneo (3), Lapin (109), Kalb (37), Brockett (42), Proehl (124) (on models of dramaturgical work);

Haring-Smith (137), Kuharski/Rafalowicz (144), Coppenger/Preston (165), Gunter (176) (on cases of collaboration)

Reading: Bly, Production Notebooks (selected)

Dramaturgy & Critical Traditions

Readings: Begin reading The Poetics

Eagleton, Literary Theory (Recommended)

Reviews by Bentley, Brustein, Gilman, et. al. (to be provided)

Lutterbse (J&P 220)

Dramaturgical Analysis

Readings: Aristotle’s Poetics

Sophocles, Oedipus Rex

Exercises: Structural Analysis of Oedipus

II. DRAMATURGICAL FUNCTIONS

Conceptualizing the Text

Exercises: Imag(in)ing Oedipus

Readings (J&P): Koszyn (276), Nielsen (283), Mazer (292), Ramirez (331)

Comparing Translations

Exercises: Compare translations of Brecht, Good Person of Setzuan

Readings (J&P): Jonas (244), Weber (266)
Script Cutting & Adaptation

**Exercises:**
- Cutting a scene *vis a vis* production concept (*Good Person*)
- Conceptualizing an adaptation (*Oedipus* or *Good Person*)

**Special Exercises in Adaptation: The Manchurian Candidate**

**Exercises:**
- Compare Condon novel and 1962 film
- Compare 1962 film and 1991 John Lahr stage adaptation
- Propose treatment for new adaptation

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### III. NEW PLAY DRAMATURGY

**Script Evaluation & Reports**

**Exercise:** Script Reports

**Reading (J&P):** Sanford (431)

**New Play Development - Processes**

**Readings (J&P):** Cummings (376), Katz (398), Jenness/Selig (401), Dixon (412), Hunt/Mason (421), Kushner (472)

**Readings:** From *Fugitive Cant to The Inland Sea* (UPAC materials)

**Exercise:** Designing a New Play Program

**New Play Pedagogy**

**Readings (J&P):** Borrega (56), Weeks (385), Castagno (441), Zeder (447);

Recommended: Borrega, "Dramaturgy in Two Senses" (to be provided)
ADDENDUM TO SYLLABUS

FINAL PROJECT: THE DRAMATURGY PROTOCOL

The Final Project for this course combines elements of a Dramaturgy Protocol as described by Leon Katz (J&P 115) and a Production Logbook as described by Mark Bly (J&P 50).

PROJECT BASIS

Your final project may be based on one of the following:

* Dramaturgical work for a department Gallery, Workshop, or Mainstage production, or for an actual future production in any context. Such work will ideally be carried out through your function as dramaturg to the project. However, your protocol or casebook may also be related to your work as a director, designer, or stage manager; or, in rare circumstances, actor.

* Dramaturgical work on a play for a hypothetical or potential future production.

* Writing of a new play or adaptation, to be developed from a dramaturgical perspective.

_Collaboration between class members on Final Projects is highly encouraged; so is work on department projects and productions. Relevant opportunities will be discussed in class._

FORMAT AND CONTENTS

The exact structure and contents of your Protocol will vary somewhat with the nature and purpose of your dramaturgical work. However, all protocols must contain the following parts:

1. A Research Section, written in terms of how the research impacts your dramaturgy of the work.

   Whether for a new or existing play, the research essay should place the play in a larger context—historical, biographical, social, cultural, or some combination thereof—significant to the writing, adaptation, and/or production process. For an existing play, such research might include production history.

2. An Analytical Section, which provides a dramaturgical analysis of the script in terms of its development, adaptation, production, or potential future production. This may take the form of either:

   (a) An analytical essay exploring the structure of the play and your conceptualization of how it might be produced (and/or adapted, as relevant)

   OR

   (b) A 'logbook' or 'casebook' essay on the writing, development, and/or production process, which incorporates a dramaturgical analysis of the text into a record of the process.

The Bibliography should include all major sources used in your research and analysis, and may be selectively annotated. In this bibliography as well as the texts of your essays, any consistent bibliographic format (e.g., MLA, Chicago) is acceptable.

Supplementary Materials may consist of either

(a) Found Materials:

For an existing play, new play, or adaptation: A small, select portfolio of xeroxed texts, images, and other materials, with annotations explaining their relevance to the dramaturgy of the work.

OR

(b) Script Materials:

For a production of an existing play: explanatory and interpretive footnoting of two pivotal scenes, including words and phrases, references, images, and any other dramaturgical points pertinent to your dramaturgy of the text.

For a new play or adaptation, a portion or portions of the script-in-process itself.

FINAL PROJECT DUE DATES

| September 7 | Preliminary Proposal Due |
| October 7   | Installment #1 Due - rough draft of research OR analytical essay |
| November 18 | Installment #2 Due - rough draft of research OR analytical essay |
| December 16 | Final Protocol Due - including final essays, bibliography, and supplementary materials |
THEA 4330: Dramaturgy
Department of Theatre
University of Utah
Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Sydney Cheek-O'Donnell
Phone: 801-385-1080
E-mail: check-o'donnell@utah.edu
Office: PAB 220
Office Hours: 2-3pm TTH or by appointment

Research Specialist
Greg Hatch, Head of Fine Arts Library
E-mail: greg.hatch@utah.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Course URL:
https://online.uen.org/webct/logon/3430965405201

"If I were ever to write a great work on dramaturgy, I would use as my starting-point the idea that spending the evening at the theater is a punishment." — Ferenc Molnar, playwright

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Preparation in the theory and practice of providing literary and historical research essential to quality dramatic production. Prerequisite: Script Analysis or equivalent.

CONTENT OVERVIEW (IN THE FORM OF A BRIEF DIALOGUE)
Student: What is a dramaturg?
Teacher: The dramaturg is the asker of questions. (Pause)
Student: Okay, ... What kinds of questions?
Teacher: Things like, "Why produce this play, now, with these resources? What is the story we are trying to tell and how can we tell it theatrically? Who is our audience? How many different meanings might a single line of dialogue have and how do we weigh our choices? What exactly is a fardel, and what does it have to do with bears?"

Student: But aren't those questions that everyone working on a production should ask?
Teacher: Yes. Dramaturgy should happen even when no one called a "dramaturg" is listed in the program.
Student: So how will this class actually work? I mean, are you going to lecture, or do these little Socratic dialogues with us all the time, or what?
Teacher: This course is structured as a collaborative seminar/workshop. So, while you'll almost always have a reading to prepare for class, much class time will be spent learning, developing, and applying skills. (getting more and more excited) But the heart of this class is going to be focused on doing dramaturgical work in support of two actual professional productions at Pioneer Theatre Company and Salt Lake Acting Company: 42nd Street and Charm!

Student: (still puzzled) So what's a dramaturg then? (beat)
Teacher: (resigned) See the first reading. (blackout)

LEARNING GOALS
By the end of the semester, students will have
- Analyzed several scripts from the dramaturg's perspective
- Conducted research to facilitate professional theatrical production
- Collaborated on the organization, evaluation, synthesis, and presentation of research to a variety of constituencies (director, designers, actors, audiences) using a variety of media (print, online, text, image, oral, visual)
- Facilitated class discussion
- Made a preliminary exploration of new play dramaturgy
- Reflected on individual dramaturgical processes

1 Quoted in Dramaturgy in American Theater, 521.
REQUIRED TEXTS
Readings available on Blackboard or on reserve at Marriott Library (bring to class):

RECOMMENDED TEXTS
* = we will be doing readings from these texts, though the readings will be accessible in the library and on Blackboard

REQUIRED PERFORMANCES
At the very least, we will use the two shows produced in the Babcock this semester as examples to for discussion. Therefore, you should make a point of seeing them. These are the shows and dates:
Babcock: Sept. 19, 20, 26, 27 @ 9am
*Time and the Comma*: Nov. 6-15 (no show on Nov. 7)
You should also see the workshop productions in Studio 115 (free admission to all performances):
*Bus Stop*: Oct. 8-11
*Alaska*: Nov. 19-22
I urge you to see shows at PTC (free to Theatre Majors) and SLAC (student discounts available):
SLAC: *The Caucasian* (Sept. 16-Oct. 11), *Master Class* (Oct. 14-Nov. 8)
If you can, you should also go to see *The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later* at Kingsbury Hall on October 9th—student tickets $10 (with id).
EVALUATION METHODS

N.B.: You are expected to maintain the highest standards of source documentation on all your assignments. Consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers by Joseph Gibaldi. No material (including visuals) should be submitted without documentation.

Project #1: Script Report. Your first written assignment will take the form of a one-page script report on the play *Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl. Detailed requirements are outlined in a separate handout, which is also available online (in the Projects folder).

Project #2: Analysis of *Eurydice*. Having studied several different analytical models, you will write your own dramaturgical analysis of Sarah Ruhl’s *Eurydice*. Detailed requirements are outlined in a separate handout, available online.

Project #3: Production Dramaturgy. This is a multi-part, collaborative project in which you will apply course theory and demonstrate acquisition of various skills. In week 5, students will divide up into two teams of production dramaturgs for either the musical *42nd Street* or *Charm*, a new play by Kathleen Cahill. Over the next ten weeks, students will complete a series of individual and group assignments including the following: script analysis (individual), research (individual), glossary (group), actor packet (group), program note (group), lobby display (group). Detailed requirements are outlined in a separate handout, which will be discussed in class and be made available online.

Project #4: Letter to the Artistic Director. For your final project, you will each select a play and pitch it for production in an upcoming season at the U of U. The formal pitch will take the form of a letter to the “artistic director” of our department, Professor Gage Williams. You will also pitch the play to your peers during our final exam period. The title of the play you wish to pitch will be due during week 10. Detailed requirements are outlined in a separate handout.

Participation. Your participation grade consists of the following: (1) completing in-class, hands-on assignments (passing = you were there and completed the assignment; failing = you didn’t complete the assignment because you weren’t there); (2) leading discussion of one assigned reading; (3) preparation for and active participation in discussions (pop quizzes to measure preparedness will be implemented in the event of poor preparation or non-participation). You cannot make up for missed in-class work unless you have a documented medical or family emergency or are participating in a University-sanctioned activity (see the Student Handbook). After three unexcused absences, you may be docked 5 points from your final grade for each additional absence.

GRADING

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Script Report</td>
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<td>Analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Drama</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Letter to AD</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent performance, superior achievement</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>Good performance, substantial achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Standard performance and achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Substandard performance, marginal achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance and achievement</td>
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ADA STATEMENT

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this course, reasonable prior notice must be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581 5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is unwanted, unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. It is a form of discrimination and a violation of University policy. Student and Faculty Codes, and state and federal laws. Report any sexual harassment of which you become aware, and be sensitive to how others view what you say and do. If you feel you are being sexually harassed or are uncertain about whether you are experiencing sexual harassment, talk to a faculty member, University official, or contact the Office of Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 581-8365 (V/TDD).

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

Some of the content of this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience. For more information on the University’s accommodations policy, visit http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/9/9-9.html.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

According to the Student Code (Section 1.B.), "Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one’s work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information, as defined further below. It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct" (http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html). If you engage in plagiarism or misrepresent someone else’s work as your own, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment and may receive a failing grade for the course. As per University policy, plagiarism will be reported to the chairperson of the student’s home department and the Senior VP for Academic Affairs. Please consult the Student Code for further details (there is a link to the Student Code on this course’s WebCT homepage).

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies prohibited conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from the class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.
The Fine Print

Do not expect me to remind you of upcoming reading or writing assignments. Check your schedule. That being said, the aforementioned schedule will inevitably change during the semester. I will announce changes in class and post them to Blackboard. It is your responsibility to keep up with the changes.

Attendance. Class should be treated like rehearsal or a production meeting. If you miss more than three class periods, your final grade for the class may go down 5% for each additional absence. However, H1N1 (a.k.a. Swine Flu) is expected to hit us hard this season. In the event of flu symptoms, please stay home and contact me immediately. Then go see a medical provider. We will make arrangements for alternate or make-up assignments if necessary.

Wish your hands frequently. Swine flu is serious business. People DIE of it. Keep yourself and those around you healthy.

Late assignments will receive reduced grades unless arrangements are made with the instructor and team members (for group assignments) no fewer than 3 days in advance of the due date. All assignments are due at class time, unless otherwise noted on the syllabus. (Assignments handed in at the beginning of class are considered “on-time.”) Assignments handed in halfway through or immediately after class are considered “late.”

Please talk to me immediately if you are falling behind in your work for any reason. I may be able to help you or refer you to one of the many services the University offers its students.

If you have been diagnosed with a disability of any kind and have not yet made use of the Center for Disability Services, please speak to them immediately about the resources available to you.

Remember that in order to graduate with a Major or Minor in Theatre, you must earn a grade of C or better in all Department of Theatre courses.

Do not ask me if you “can miss class.” See my policy on attendance for more information on this subject.

Extra credit: no. Do your work. On time.

Revision: You may revise written assignments for improved grades. These revisions must be significant, though, not simply fixing typos.

Check the schedule carefully before making fall break and holiday plans.

Note: The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification and when the changes will best serve the educational experience of the student.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Subject to Change…

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<tr>
<th>Wk 1</th>
<th>What the @#$%^&amp; is dramaturgy?</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>Intro to Course</td>
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<td>Mini-Lecture: Dramaturgy in History</td>
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<td>Library Demo: MasterPlots</td>
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<td>8/27</td>
<td>No Class. U Theatre Fall Kickoff in Studio 115</td>
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<td>Read McReachie &quot;Facilitating Discussion&quot;</td>
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<td>Wk 2</td>
<td>Script Analysis</td>
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<td>9/1</td>
<td>Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 1; Cattaneo (all online)</td>
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<td>Activity: Role of the dramaturgy</td>
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<td>9/3</td>
<td>Prep: Read Backwards and Forwards and Fuchs’ “Visit to a Small Planet” (online)</td>
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<td>Activity: Comparison of methods</td>
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<tr>
<th>Wk 3</th>
<th>Script Analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>Prep: Read <em>Eurydice</em> by Sarah Ruhl and prepare 1-page script report</td>
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<td>Activity: Analysis of <em>Eurydice</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Library Work: Getting started, clarifying topics</td>
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<td>1-Page Script Report (form available online)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Wk 4</th>
<th>Script Analysis: Musicals</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Prep: Read <em>42nd Street</em></td>
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<td>Activity: Preliminary Analysis</td>
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<td>Analysis of <em>Eurydice</em> Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Prep: Read Maslon “With a Song in My Art,” Gunter “Exploration” (online)</td>
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<td>Library Work: Images and AV</td>
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<td><em>Bakkhai</em> (Red Butte) runs Sept. 19, 20, 26, 27 at 9am</td>
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<td><em>The Caretaker</em> (SLAC) runs Sept. 16-Oct. 11</td>
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<th>Wk 5</th>
<th>Script Analysis: Non-Realism</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/22</td>
<td>Prep: Read <em>Charm</em></td>
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<td>Activity: Preliminary Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 7, Haring-Smith “Non-Realism” (online)</td>
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<td>Activity: Dramaturging Non-Realism, Form teams for Project #3</td>
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<td><em>Chorus Line</em> (at PTC) runs Sept. 25-Oct. 10</td>
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<th>Wk 6</th>
<th>Analysis to Research</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/29</td>
<td>Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 6</td>
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<td>Library Work: Production History</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discuss <em>Bakkhai</em></td>
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<td>10/1</td>
<td>Prep: Analysis of team play (<em>Charm</em> or <em>42nd Street</em>)</td>
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<td>Activity: Comparison of analyses</td>
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<td>Individual Analysis of Team Play Due</td>
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<tr>
<th>Wk 7</th>
<th>Communication Tools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/6</td>
<td>Prep: Read Chemers Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Activities: Why this play now? Teams devise preliminary research plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>Prep: At least one item of electronic content for your team’s research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Workshop: Wikis</td>
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<td>Library Research: Copyright and Fair Use</td>
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<td><em>Bus Stop</em> (Studio 115) runs Oct. 8-11</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Laramie Project: 10 Years Later</em> Oct. 9 only</td>
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<td><em>Master Class</em> (SLAC) runs Oct. 14-Nov. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11-17</td>
<td><strong>FALL BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 8</td>
<td><strong>Models of Dramaturgy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>Prep: Read Ramirez “Multicultural,” Power “Re-imagining,” and Finque “Queer”</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Activity: Discuss models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>Prep: Read Mazer “Rebottling,” Falls “Classic”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guest: Elizabeth Williamson, Dramaturg (PTC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk 9</td>
<td><strong>Collaborating with the Production Team</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/27</td>
<td>Prep: Read Hopkins “Counter-text,” Hartley “Knowing Your Audience” and “Tools” (online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity: Review and Critique Sample Packets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Prep: Bring possible content for Actor Packet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity: Begin creating Actor Packets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Is He Dead</em> (PTC) runs Oct. 30-Nov. 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk 10</td>
<td><strong>Selecting Translations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>Prep: Read Weber’s “Foreign Drama” and assigned translation of Molière’s <em>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guest: Christine Jones, Assoc. Prof. of Languages and Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity: create template for evaluating translations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Prep: 1-page report on your translation of <em>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity: Evaluate translations, make recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Time and the Conways</em> (Babcock) runs Nov. 6-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 11</td>
<td>Connecting with Your Audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Rehearsal Presentations</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 12</th>
<th>Connecting with Your Audience</th>
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</table>
| 11/12 | Prep: Read Clemens Ch. 9  
Activity: Review and Critique Program Notes; establish grading rubric for Program Note assignment |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 12</th>
<th>Connecting with Your Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11/17 | Prep: Readings (to be distributed); visit the UMFA  
Guest: Virginia Catherall, Curator of Education, UMFA |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 12</th>
<th>Connecting with Your Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11/19 | Prep: Read Kosidowski “Thinking” (online)  
Activity: Audience Research: PTC and SLAC  
Discuss: Time and the Convos |

*Alaska (Studio 115) runs Nov. 19-22*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 13</th>
<th>Connecting with Your Audience</th>
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</table>
| 11/24 | Prep: Bring possible content for lobby displays  
Activity: Develop rubric for displays; work on lobby displays |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 13</th>
<th>Connecting with Your Audience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING BREAK</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 14</th>
<th>Collaborating with the Playwright</th>
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</table>
| 12/1  | Prep: Read Jonas “How to Talk,” Dixon “Dialogue” (online)  
Activity: Prepare for guest playwright |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 14</th>
<th>Collaborating with the Playwright</th>
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</table>
| 12/3  | Prep: Read Dakota Sky; listen to selected music  
Guest: Kathleen Cahill, playwright |

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<tr>
<th>Wk 15</th>
<th>Lobby Displays</th>
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<tr>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Activity: Work on Lobby Displays</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk 15</th>
<th>Lobby Displays</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>Present and Evaluate Lobby Displays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Exam Period: 12/15 3:30-5:30pm: Letter to Artistic Director Due, Pitch Plays
THEA 525 • Dramaturgy

Dr. Shelley Ohr  
Office: Theatre Arts 213 (San Diego State Univ.)  
E-mail: mori@mail.sdsu.edu  

Spring 2011 Meeting Time: Tuesdays 3:30-6:10  
Office Hours: Mondays 1-6-00, Thursdays 11:00-12:00  

REQUIRED READING LIST—All books are available at the SDSU Bookstore.
- Ily, Mark, ed.—The Production Notebooks: Theatre in Process, Volume I
- O’Riordan, Scott R., Anne Fletcher, and Julie Felice Dubiner—The Process of Dramaturgy: A Handbook
- Wright, Doug—I Am My Own Wife
- Additional assigned reading is available on Blackboard. More information will be provided in class.

REQUIRED PERFORMANCE LIST—All performances are part of the SDSU Theatre Season. I recommend that you take advantage of the $30 student subscription for the semester. Visit the online Box Office: http://theatre.sdsu.edu

Please also join LMDA, Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, as a student member. More information will be provided in class. The website where you can join the organization is: www.lmda.org

EVALUATION—Students will be evaluated using a 400-point system.
- Preparation, Attendance, and Class Participation: 20% (80 points)
- Short Projects (4 projects. 50 points each): 50% (a total of 200 points)
- Final Project: 5% (120 points)

Final Grades will be awarded as follows: 100%-90%: A, 89%-80%: B, 79%-70%: C, 69%-60%: D, 59% + below: F

CLASS PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION: This class relies heavily on active daily discussion. I will expect you to be prepared to discuss the reading or viewing assigned on the calendar below. Please also bring the appropriate text to each class period. Feel welcome to pose questions and respond to the input of your fellow participants. Please keep in mind participation is thoughtful, considered, and includes others in the discussion is the most valuable.

SHORT PROJECTS: These projects will be assigned in class and completed in a relatively brief period of time. Detailed information and guidelines for these assignments will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard. Below are some of the projects that will be completed:
- Research scavenger hunt (+ in-class presentation)
- Mini Actors’ Packet
- Abstract Structure Diagram
- Theatre review (500 words)
- Dramaturgy with a playwright or screenwriter on a new script
- Season Planning project (+ in-class presentation)
- Program note (500 words)
- Imaging assignment

FINAL PROJECT: Significant time outside of class will be spent working on a dramaturgical project that will be the final project for the class. You will decide on the content and form for this project, in consultation with the instructor. One of the tenets of this class is that the category of “dramaturgical work” is a broad one that may include a dramaturgy protocol for a production you are dramaturging or would like to dramaturge; an in-depth research project; an extensive collection of image research, an adaptation, a translation, an essay, or something else entirely. A one-page proposal for your final project is due on 22 February 2011. A verbal update on your progress on the final project should be shared in office hours or via email the week of 5 April 2011.

LMDA: Students are required to join the professional organization for dramaturgs in North America, the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA). Members of this organization work in all areas of dramaturgy, in professional, non-profit, and academic theatres, in talent agencies, as well as in film and television. The membership is comprised of dramaturgs at all different points in their career. Students are especially encouraged to link up with the Early Career Dramaturgs’ group in LMDA. More information is available at www.lmda.org (this link is also on Blackboard). Of particular note: LMDA’s international annual conference is coming to Denver July 7-10, and all students are encouraged to volunteer for this conference and to attend the events and sessions, if at
all possible. This is an excellent opportunity for aspiring dramaturgs to meet working dramaturgs and get to know
more about the profession. More information will be provided on the conference as it becomes available.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct: This course will adhere strictly to all SDSU policies with regard to
students’ academic integrity and expected classroom behavior. Please contact me if you have questions about these
policies.

If you have questions about the readings or assignments, please come to office hours or contact me at
morit@ mathematica.edu. Syllabus is subject to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Material Discussed / Reading Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>Introduction and Goals of the Course: The varied category of “dramaturgical work.” What is a play?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>The History and Definition of the Role(s) of the Dramaturg. Reading: Bly’s “Introduction,” Chapter 1 of The Process of Dramaturgy and Katz’s “The Complex Dramaturg” on Blackboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 22</td>
<td>Dramaturgy and History and Structure; Working on a “new” play; Analyzing structure Reading: I Am My Own Wife by Doug Wright <em>FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Dramaturgy and History and Structure: Sharing research, Working with a director Reading: Chapter 2 of The Process of Dramaturgy Discussion: I Am My Own Wife and Symphonies of Clouds (see performance before this class period).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Dramaturging an “Old” Play with an Auteur Director Reading: Dionysus’ Death in Bly’s Notebooks (93-124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Working with Writers and New Scripts [SHORT PROJECT 3 DUE] Discussion: Eurydice (see before this class period).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK—No class meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Dramaturgy in Rehearsal: Protocol and Practice [SHORT PROJECT 4 DUE] Reading: Chapter 4 of The Process of Dramaturgy UPDATE ON FINAL PROJECT DUE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Working with Writers and Devising New Scripts Reading: “The Dramaturgical Dialogue” by Michael Bigelow Dixon and “The Archaeology of Performance” by Mary Zimmerman on Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>The Dramaturg as Artist Reading: “Research, Counter-Text, Performance” by D.J. Hopkins on Blackboard In Class Presentations of Short Project 44 [SHORT PROJECT 4 DUE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Dramaturgy and Adaptation Discussion: production of Little Women (see performance before this class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Presentations of Final Projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>Final Projects are due. Please turn them into my mailbox in the TTF office.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

105
TH410: PRINCIPLES OF DRAMATURGY
EMERSON COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS
FALL 2010 // TR: 4-5:45
Instructor: Magda Romanska, PhD

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
TH410: Principles of Dramaturgy course is designed to provide theoretical and critical background to the profession. It explores the history of dramaturgy as well as different professional venues and the variety of tasks that dramaturgs perform within a particular venue. The course introduces students to the areas of Dramatic Criticism (theatre critics, theatre scholars, translators, script analysis and editors), Literary Office Dramaturgy (new script analyses, literary management of the theatre), and Production Dramaturgy (working with the director, new play development, etc.). This course is open to juniors and seniors. Sophomores must have permission of the instructor to enroll. The course is offered every two years.

SYLLABUS
TUES, SEPT 7
INTRODUCTION – DRAMATURGY HANDBOOK

TH, SEPT 9
History of Dramaturgy: European Tradition
READ:
• Cattaneo, Arne. “Dramaturgy: An Overview” (DIAT, 3-16)
• Schlicter, Joel. “The Beginning There Was Lessing... Then Brecht, Muller and Other Dramaturgs” (DIAT, 16-24)
• Esslin, Martin. “The Role of the Dramaturg in European Theater.” (WID, 43)
• “The Critic Comes Full Circle: An Interview with Kenneth Tynan.” (WID, 197)
• Kott, Jan. “Directors, Dramaturgs, and War in Poland” (WID, 223)

TUES, SEPT 14
ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE /European Dramaturgy/
Sample assignment: German Dramaturgy

TR, SEPT 16
American Dramaturgy
READ:
• “Dramaturgy in America: Two Interviews and Six Statements” (WID, 105)
TUES, SEPT 21

ASSIGNMENT # 2 DUE /American Dramaturgy/
Sample assignment: American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco

TR, SEPT 23

Institutional Dramaturgy

READ:

TUES, SEPT 28, 30

ASSIGNMENT # 3 DUE /Institutional Dramaturgy: Ideal Theatre Project/
Sample assignment: Theatre in Detroit

TUE, OCT 5

Production Dramaturgy

READ:
- Crum, Jane Ann. "Toward a Dramaturgical Sensibility." (DIAT, 72-77)
- Pettengill, Richard. "Dramaturguing Education." (DIAT, 102-114)
- Preston, Travis And Coppers, Roger. "The Way We Work." (DIAT, 165-175)
- Gunter, Gregory. "Exploration Through Imagery: Gregory Gunter Talks about Working with Anne Bogart." (DIAT, 176-179)
- Kennedy, Allen. "Professional Theatre and Education: Context for Dramaturgy." (DIAT, 190-204)

TR, OCT 7, 12

Before the Rehearsal: Play Analysis - 10 Questions to Ask

READ:
- Fuchs, Elmo. "EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play." Theatre 34.2 (Summer 2004): 5-9 (WebCT)

TUE, OCT 14

During the Rehearsal: Working with the Director

READ:
TR, OCT 19
After the Rehearsal: Audience Outreach


TR, OCT 21
New Plays Development

- Cummings, Scott T. "Garden or Ghetto? The Paradox of New Play Development." (DIAT, 377-384)
- Harvey, Alec. "Is There a Dramaturg in the House?" *American Theatre*, Nov. 4, 21-9-74 (WebCT)

TUE, OCT 26
Translation/Adaptation

- Jonas, Susan. "Aiming the Canon at New: Strategies for Adaptation." (DIAT, 24-4-265)
- Weber, Carl. "Foreign Drama in Translation: Some Reflections on Otherness, Xenophobia, the Translator’s Task, and the Problems They Present." (DIAT, 266-282)

TH, OCT 28
Dramaturgy Portfolio

TUE, NOV 2
Broadway Dramaturgy

READ:


ASSIGNMENT # 6 DUE /Broadway Dramaturgy/

TUE, NOV 4
Dramaturgy Beyond Theatre: Film Script Research, Opera, etc.

READ:

TR, NOV 9  
Dramaturgy as a Profession  
READ:  
ASSIGNMENT # 7 DUE / Dramaturgy as a Profession/  

TR, NOV 11 - No class  

TUE, NOV 16  
IT CLASS - PLACE TBA  
You will be working on your on-line portfolios  

TR, NOV 18 - LIBRARY CLASS - MEET IN THE LOBBY OF THE LIBRARY  
You will be working on your Production Dramaturgy project  

NOV 25 - THANKSGIVING BREAK  

TUE, NOV 23, 30  
ASSIGNMENT # 4 DUE /Production Dramaturgy/  

TR, DEC 2  
Dramaturgy Internship  
READ:  
ASSIGNMENT # 8 DUE / Dramaturgy Internships/  

TUE, DEC 7  
Graduate Programs  
READ:  
• Borroca, Art. "Dramaturging New Play Dramaturgy: The Yale and Iowa Ideals." (DIAT, 56)  
ASSIGNMENT # 9 DUE / Dramaturgy Graduate Programs/  

TUE, DEC 9, 14  
ASSIGNMENT # 5 DUE /Dramaturgy Portfolio/
BOOKS:
Available at Emerson Bookstore or Amazon.com. They are also on reserve at the Emerson Library.

Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book (DIA1)
by Susan S. Jonas (Author), Geoffrey S. Proehl (Author), Michael Lupo (Author)

What is Dramaturgy? (WID)
by Bert Cardullo (Editor)

Ghost Light: An Introductory Handbook for Dramaturgy (GL)
by Michael Mark Chernets

by Scott R. Irelan, Anne Fletcher, JulieFelise Dubiner

COURSE OBJECTIVES
- To familiarize students with the various dramaturgical traditions, stressing particularly the differences between European and American dramaturgy.
- To introduce the students to professional dramaturgy, with an emphasis on production and institutional dramaturgy.
- To prepare students for various career options in theatre dramaturgy.
- To assist students with their career goals in professional dramaturgy, with an emphasis on portfolio preparation, internships and graduate programs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- The students will understand the dramaturgical procedures in production and institutional dramaturgy.
- The students will become familiar with the profession of dramaturgy.
- The students will learn to prepare dramaturgy protocol, program notes, and a dramaturgy portfolio.
- The students will research dramaturgy internships and graduate programs.
- The students will understand various career options in theatre and film dramaturgy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
- Come to class on time. Please, see class attendance policy.
- Read all assigned texts and come to class prepared to discuss them. You are expected to participate in classroom discussion, and I will call on you to answer questions pertaining to the readings.
- You are being trained to read the material as artists and/or scholars, not as a general reader, and that means you should always know the materials of the day thoroughly and be prepared to have specific, concrete things to add to our discussions. The success of the class depends on you sharing your ideas and taking an active role in discussion.
- Fully participate in classroom discussion, contributing your own ideas. Please, make sure you raise your hand before you speak. Show respect towards your fellow classmates. Listen to them and let them speak when it's their turn.
- Prepare your presentations and papers on time. Please, see class policy on late assignments.
- Each student is encouraged to make at least two individual appointments with the instructor throughout the semester.
FINAL EXAM
NOTE: According to the department policy, we do not administer early or late exams (unless you're sick). Therefore, please plan your holiday vacations and family gatherings with the final exam date in mind. Please, do not purchase your plane tickets or make other plans for this date (unless you do not plan taking the exam). No exceptions.

ASSIGNMENTS
Assignments must be typed and turned in on the due date, at the start of class. Use one-inch margins and 12-point font. While citing your sources, be consistent and always follow the MLA format. For detailed guidelines, you can either refer to the MLA handbook or you can use this website: Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism. Cite ALL your sources and include bibliography.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:
One day - 10 % of the grade deducted
Two days - 20 % of the grade deducted
Assignments received 3 days late will not be accepted.
Final portfolios received late will not be accepted.
NOTE: No electronic submissions. Hard copies only. No exceptions.

HELP
To get help with their papers (proofreading, organizing ideas, etc), students can make appointments at the Writing Center in person at 216 Tremont Street or by calling 617-824-7874. Because the center can get busy, students should make appointments in advance. This is not a drop-in center.
For more information, see website:
http://www.emerson.edu/learning_assistance/writing_center/index.cfm

GRADING
The College uses a system of letter grades and quality points to evaluate student performance.
Grade point averages are computed on a scale where $A = 4.0$ (93-100), $A - = 3.7$ (90-92), $B+ = 3.3$ (87-89), $B = 3.0$ (83-86), $B - = 2.7$ (80-82), $C+ = 2.3$ (77-79), $C = 2.0$ (73-76), $C - = 1.7$ (70-72), $D = 1.0$ (60-69), $F = 0$ (failing). Based on this scale, the following class grading policy will be observed:
- Class attendance and participation - 200 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 1 / European Dramaturgy - 50 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 2 / American Dramaturgy - 50 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 3 / Institutional Dramaturgy - 100 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 4 / Production Dramaturgy - 250 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 5 / Dramaturgy Portfolio - 250 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 6 / Broadway Dramaturgy - 25 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 7 / Dramaturgy as a Profession - 25 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 8 / Dramaturgy Internships - 25 points
- ASSIGNMENT # 9 / Dramaturgy Graduate Programs - 25 points
TOTAL - 1000 Points

FINAL GRADES
- $A = 1000 - 930$ points
- $A - = 900 - 929$ points
- $B+ = 870 - 899$ points
- $B = 830 - 869$ points
- $B - = 800 - 829$ points
- $C+ = 770 - 799$ points
- $C = 730 - 769$ points
- $C - = 700 - 729$ points
- $D = 600 - 699$ points
- $F = 698$ or less

An I (Incomplete) is assigned when students engaged in passing work are unable to complete class assignments for medical reasons or because of other extenuating circumstances.
DR-458-10 DRAMATURGY
Fall 2010

Professor Michele Volansky
Mvolansky2@wascoll.edu
Office: GCA 224 (Washington College)

Class Meeting Time: MWF 2:30-3:45
Class Location: GCA 206

Course Objectives:

"In a good play, everybody's right"
Friedrich Hebbel

What makes a "good play"? Who gets to decide? How do we read plays as actors? As directors? As designers? As other theater artists?

One of the roles of the dramaturg is to challenge one's artistic colleagues to find new or different ways of reading a play. In many ways, this adds up to the fact that everyone on the production team becomes a dramaturg. Which is a good thing. Such inquiry reveals exactly why a liberal arts education is so significant, as we will explore: analysis, research, writing, appreciation of cultural history and current events, artistic creativity, aesthetic judgment, responsibility, collaboration with other, and independence of mind and spirit. You will draw upon what you have learned so far, teach you to build from what you know to what you do not know and give you practice in conveying information to others in forms that they can use and understand. Some people call the dramaturg a "universal translator," a skill you will practice by considering questions like how theater seasons are constructed, how playwrights can be aided in play development, what kind of research directors and actors need to prepare a production, how productions can be contextualized for audiences, and how theatre texts and stage performances are related.
Over the course of this semester, we will discover:

1. how to read, talk and write about a play (both old and new) well
2. the many tasks of an American dramaturg and the various techniques and strategies used
3. the delineation between the attributes, role and function of the word “dramaturg/dramaturgy”
4. the role and significance of a theater literary office

**This syllabus is indebted to Lue Douthit, Tori Haring-Smith, Geoff Proehl

**Course Texts:**
There is one required text for this class:


There will also be articles and other handouts, which I will provide for you.

**Course Policies:**

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism, whether intentional or accidental, will not be tolerated. Sloppy academic investigation hurts not only you, but hurts the artists and scholars who strive to share their insights with the greater community. Evidence of plagiarism will constitute a failing grade for the project in question, and depending on the severity of the case, may incur further sanctions, including but not limited to reporting to the Honor Board and the Dean of the College, and failure of the course. Recall you signed the Honor Code upon your orientation to the College.

*Attendance:* Your "Class Participation" grade consists of two parts, Attendance and Engagement, for a total of 20 points. This is not a lecture class – I will not prattle on for sessions at a time. As such, your attendance and engagement is mandatory.

You are entitled to miss FOUR (4) classes. They can be excused or unexcused, they are all the same to me. Each absence beyond four will result in the subtraction of one half grade letter from your final grade (for example, if you miss five classes, the highest grade you might achieve is an A-). **More than FOUR absences constitutes failure of the class.** YOU are responsible for making up the work you missed. Don’t cut class – it is bad for you, for me and for the entire class.

The other part of your “Class Participation” grade consists of your engagement in class discussion. Evaluation of your part in class discussions as follows:

10 = shows thorough reading of all assignments, contributes thoughtfully and creatively to class discussion, brings additional, outside insights and information to the discussion, makes connections between various elements of the material, adds positively to the class’s knowledge and understanding of the subject.
8 = contributes to every class discussion, shows careful reading and thought about the material, listens to others comments and adds or responds to them
6 = occasionally contributes to discussion, but shows only quick, casual reading of the texts
4 = Rarely or never speaks in class

Due Dates and Late Work: No late work will be accepted (it's not that I deduct points for late work; it simply will be rejected) without permission. Permission will be granted only for extreme circumstances, such as serious illness or family loss requiring time away from campus. Please seek permission for extensions as far in advance as possible. This is strict and final; no late papers. They will not be read, commented on, or considered. Due dates are always announced well in advance, and papers are due at the beginning of class.

Format for Written Work: All written assignments should traffic in exceptional grammar and spelling, and should be submitted in Times New Roman 12 point type (that's what this is). Your work should be double-spaced, contain a footer, with a page number and your last name; each paper should be given an appropriate title and also include a title page, with your name, the course title and number, the date and the Honor Code with your signature; your papers must be stapled.

** A word about the Internet: It is a wondrous and sometimes dangerous resource – wondrous because of the sheer volume and ease of information, potentially dangerous because (unlike books or journals) the information has not been mediated by a critic or editor. Information may be inaccurate or misleading. You must utilize a balance of resources – you are entitled to use only three (3) Internet sources (non-Wiki) for the research assignments.

Reading Breakdown:

**Introduction**
Anne Bogart: *A Director Prepares*
  Introduction
  Preface
  "Embarrassment"

Liz Lerman: *Critical Response Process*

**Part One: What is Dramaturgy?**


Mary Luckhurst, "Gotthold Lessing and Hamburg Dramaturgy" (from *Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre*. Cambridge, 2006)
Lenora Inez Brown, "You Can’t Tell a Dramaturg by Her Title" (from American Theatre, January 2001)


Morgan, Jenness, "Tells the Truth to Paul Selig" (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Part Two: How to Read a Play
Elinor Fuchs, “Visit to a Small Planet” (Theater, vol. 34, #2 Summer 2004)

Lee Devin, “Conceiving the Form” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

David Ball, Backwards and Forwards, “Part Three”

Rush “Script Analysis – What is a Play?”, “Script Analysis – Character,” “Script Analysis – Language”

Stanley Vincent Longman: (Page and Stage) “The Nature of Drama – What is a Play”

Part Three: The Laramie Project
read Act One, The Laramie Project
read Act Two, The Laramie Project

Part Four: New Work Dramaturgy
Scott Cummings, “Garden or Ghetto” (from Jonas/Proehl/Lupu, Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book. Harcourt Brace, 1997)

Mark Chemers, "New Plays" (from Ghost Light. SIU Press, 2010)

David Grimm, “Studio Theatre’s Kit Marlowe”
Tanya Palmer, “Risky Business” (Theatre Topics, vol. 13, #1)

Part Five: Criticism and the Audience
Paul Kadoswalski, “Thinking Through the Audience” (Theatre Topics, vol. 13, #1)

Norman Lear, “On Critics”

Lloyd Trott, “Dramaturgical Dreaming” (from Dramaturgy: A User’s Guide. Central School of Speech and Drama, 1999)
Thaiss and Davis, “The Theatre Review and Dramatic Criticism”


**Part Six: Working as a Dramaturg**

D.J. Hopkins, “Research, Counter-text, Performance: Reconsidering the (Textual) Authority of the Dramaturg” (*Theatre Topics*, vol. 13, #1)

Judith Rudakoff and Lynn Thomson: *Between the Lines*

**Class Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 8/30</td>
<td>Introduction to class, syllabus, reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 9/1</td>
<td>Readings: Bogart, Lerman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 9/6</td>
<td>Part One readings/discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 9/8</td>
<td>Part One readings/discussion</td>
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<td>Mon 9/13</td>
<td>Part One readings/discussion</td>
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<td>Wed 9/15</td>
<td>Part One readings/discussion</td>
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<td>Mon 9/20</td>
<td>Part Two readings/discussion</td>
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<td>Wed 9/22</td>
<td>Part Two readings/discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 9/27</td>
<td>Part Two readings/discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 9/29</td>
<td>Part Two readings/discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 10/4</td>
<td>Introduction to <em>The Laramie Project</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 10/6</td>
<td><em>The Laramie Project – Act One</em></td>
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<td><em>Initial Assignment DUE</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 10/11</td>
<td><em>The Laramie Project – Act One</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 10/13</td>
<td><em>The Laramie Project – Act Two</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 10/18</td>
<td><em>The Laramie Project</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 10/20</td>
<td><em>The Laramie Project</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 10/25</td>
<td>Part Four readings/discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 10/27</td>
<td>Part One Assignment DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 11/1</td>
<td>Part Four readings/discussion</td>
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<td>Wed 11/3</td>
<td>Part Four readings/discussion</td>
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<td>Mon 11/8</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Part Two Assignment DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 11/10</td>
<td>ADVISING DAY – NO CLASSES</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mon 11/15  Part Five readings/discussion
          Program Notes DUE
Wed 11/17  Part Five readings/discussion
Mon 11/22  First Day presentations DUE
Weds 11/24 THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASSES
Mon 11/29  Part Six readings/discussion
          Part Six readings/discussion
Wed 12/1   Part Six readings/discussion
Mon 12/6   The Laramie Project – 10 years later
          Critical Response DUE
Weds 12/8  The Laramie Project – 10 years later
          Critical Response DUE

Assignments/Assessment – Key Due Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part one assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part two assignment</td>
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<td>11/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>First day presentation</td>
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<td>Critical response</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protocol</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Day of exam</td>
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<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Engagement</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Please recall that grades are determined thusly:

100 = A+ = perfect work, exceptional
90-99 = A = outstanding work
80-89 = B = good, solid work
70-79 = C = average work
60-69 = D = below average work
0-59 = F = failing work
The Laramie Project – Initial Assignment
DUE 10/6
10 points

This is a simple assignment. You have read Act One of The Laramie Project. Answer the following two questions in no more than 250 words:

1. What do you think this play is about?
2. What do you think will happen next?

GRADE RUBRIC
10-8  A
7-5   B
4-2   C
1     D
The Laramie Project – part one assignment
DUE: 10/25
10 points

Using The Laramie Project as your guide, compile the following information:

A. Source Material:

Playwright’s sources – what inspired the playwright to write this particular play?

Examine the playwright’s source material for the play. How did the playwright utilize, modify, or explicate the source material in creating the world of the play?

B. Glossary of “nuggets”

Create a glossary of short, concise entries (nuggets) that constitute necessary and interesting background material for the production team’s edification and consideration. Make sure you include the reference (what it is) AND page number for the specifics.

Include in your annotation the following information:
1. Geographical references
2. Pronunciations (regionalisms)
3. Literary allusions
4. References to the natural world of the play (location)
5. References to the social, cultural, political, ideological worlds of the play
6. Any and every word or referent in the play text which might be foreign or confusing to other members of the production team should be researched, defined, and explained here.

C. Previous Productions

Characteristic elements, strengths, problems, choices made by subsequent productions. Discuss any interesting or absurd choices made in other productions. Are there any solutions that address some of the problem areas you have cited?

GRADE RUBRIC
10-8 A
7-5 B
4-2 C
1 D
The Laramie Project – part two assignment
DUE: 11/8
10 points

Using The Laramie Project as your guide, compile the following information:

A. Collage of images

Visuals are powerful catalysts and communicators. This aspect of your investigation of The Laramie Project synthesizes your ideas, your intuition, your insights, your artistry, and your research. The collage may be a separate two-or three-dimensional creation or may be compiled in a file. In your collage and all other visuals, beware of including pictures of people intended to represent or resonate with characters in the play. While illuminating in highly select circumstances, it tends to intimidate actors (who may see an image of the characters and worry that they don’t “measure up”).

B. Verbal Images

This section is made up of lyrics, poetry, proverbs, epigrams, headlines, quotes, etc.

Students tend to shortchange this section. Don’t! At the same time, beware of straying too far afield of the play. Try to seek period and contemporary resonances as you gather the words of other writers.

C. Literal Images

This is a crucial nuts-and-bolts section of your research, which must include (but is not limited to) period depictions of objects, fashions, locales, etc. of the play. Make sure you include the reference (what it is) AND page number for the specifics.

GRADE RUBRIC
10-8  A
7-5   B
4-2   C
1     D
Program Notes – The Laramie Project
DUE: 11/15
10 points

In creating program notes for The Laramie Project, you are probably flexing the dramaturg’s most independent muscles. Program notes really are the dramaturg’s birthright...although some directors are more prescriptive than other when it comes to the content of program notes. As the creator of program notes, you have the dual challenge (some might call it joy) of considering your very personal take on the play and you intuition about the needs of the audience.

The complexity and nuances of your response to play and its world, the breadth and depth of your research, and your involvement in the production all impact on your choices of subject, style, tone, and texture of your program notes.

Please keep in mind that program notes should not explain the play — what it’s about or what it should do. Most good notes get inside one aspect of a play text.

In considering content, remember that one of the functions of the dramaturg is to serve as a liaison between the theatre and the audience. Program notes are your key means, as dramaturg, of connecting the audience to the play and/or production process (or more accurately, to your passion or interest). And whether viewers read them beforehand, at intermission, or afterward, the tone you choose — formal, folksy, enthused, wry — may have an effect as strong as your content in “preparing” the audience for the encounter that awaits them, or in continuing the dialogue experience that can be taken home; hence your notes have the potential to remind audience members of the nature of the theatre institution itself — how it cares for its patrons and its artistic efforts.

Imagine that you are writing notes for a professional theatre that draws a large, generally well-educated metropolitan audience. You should plan on a main essay of about 1500 to 2200 words. You may include a maximum of two supplementary short pieces — anecdotes, a timeline, an encapsulation of an event or person, etc. — but this is optional (something to include if you can’t bear to omit a “nugget” re. an area of secondary importance).

GRADE RUBRIC
10-8 A
7-5 B
4-2 C
1-0 D
Presentation of First Day Materials
DUE: 11/22
10 points

Using your program notes for *The Laramie Project* as a springboard, prepare a 5-7 minute presentation to the class. Assume that we are the actors in the production and you are sharing with the cast key pieces of information you think they might need to perform their roles. Feel free to use PowerPoint, video, audio or other visual/aural resources. I will collect your notes for the presentation.

GRADE RUBRIC
10-8 A
7-5 B
4-2 C
1 D

Critical Review
DUE: 12/8
10 points

You are required to attend all of the Drama Department productions (necessary for classroom discussion) and write a 2-4 page review of one of these productions. In class, we will discuss ways of writing about theater, and these guidelines will serve as the basis of your own writing.

The following is the schedule for this fall’s productions:

*Imaginary Invalid* directed by Professor Jason Rubin
October 7-9

*True West* A senior thesis directed by Kris Wilson
October 29-30

*Swimming in the Shallows* A senior thesis directed by Emmy Landiskroener
November 3-6

*Drink Me (Or, The Strange Case of Alice Times Three)* A senior thesis directed by Brittany Rankin
November 12-13

*Beyond Therapy* A senior thesis directed by James Winn
November 19-20

GRADE RUBRIC
10-8 A
7-5 B
4-2 C
1 D
Final Project – Dramaturg’s Protocol  
DUE Day of final exam

You are to use The Laramie Project for this project. You are to consider each question. Please elaborate, expand and certainly include the previous three assignments regarding The Laramie Project as part of this final project.

Overall Scope:  
For this play, identify:

Main characters  
Protagonist and antagonist  
Plot  
Brief summary  
Main emotional highpoint(s)  
Main turning point(s)  
Author’s intended audience  
Author’s hoped-for effect on the audience

Individual Scene  
Select one scene from the play.

What is the function of this scene in the overall play scheme?  
Describe the central event in this scene  
Identify any emotional highpoints  
Identify any turning points for characters

Characters  
Identify any discoveries / recognitions / realizations for characters:  
• Where are they prepared for?  
• What do they want—when do they realize this?  
• Identify any decisions made by characters; indicate when the issue was first introduced  
• Identify active and passive characters  
• Is communication direct or oblique?  
• Are characters’ names significant? What do they “mean”?  

The Dramaturgy of You  
This is where your images, music, riffs can be included.

What color is this scene? Major or minor key? What pace? Any specific rhythm? Texture?  
Weight? Size? What temperature? What price?

GRADE RUBRIC  
25-21 A  
20-16 B  
15-11 C  
10-6 D
Appendix II The lobby display:

Street Scene: An American Opera
Music by Kurt Weill
Book by Elmer Rice
Lyrics by Langston Hughes

Kurt Weill

Kurt Weill was born in 1900.

By the 1920’s he was already well respected in Germany as a musician and dramatist.

His early notoriety came from his work with Bertolt Brecht and their most notable musical theatre contributions: The Three Penny Opera and The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny.

Weill Emigrated to America from Germany in 1933, fleeing harassment from the Nazi Party.

Here he worked both in the New York theatre and Hollywood movies. Other Broadway credits include Lady in the Dark, One Touch of Venus, Knickerbocker Holiday

Elmer Rice

Elmer Rice (Elmer Leopold Reizenstein), was born in a 90th Street New York City walk-up in 1892.

His German grandparents had emigrated to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.

Rice graduated from New York Law School in 1912 and had a short-lived career as a lawyer.

When he began writing plays many were crime and courtroom dramas. His first play On Trial ran 365 performances on Broadway and was the most profitable of his career.

His most famous play is perhaps the surrealistic The Adding Machine.
Langston Hughes

Poet Langston Hughes was born in Joplin Missouri in 1902. He was a great influence to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920’s.

The Academy of American Poets notes: “He wanted to tell the stories of his people in ways that reflected their actual culture, including both their suffering and their love for music, laughter and language itself.”

Indeed his poetry is so musical Hughes earned the epithet: The Jazz Poet.

Street Scene

Elmer Rice’s play Street Scene opened on Broadway on January 19th, 1928 at the Playhouse Theatre in New York.

Later that year it won the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Mr. Rice had trouble financing the show so he produced the show.

When director George Cukor walked out, he also directed.

In his autobiography, Rice titles his chapter on Street Scene “The Play That Had No Chance.” To his delight it ran on Broadway until June of 1930.

Street Scene: An American Opera

It was Weill’s great American dream to write an American opera for Broadway audiences.

Street Scene: an American Opera opened in Broadway’s Adelphi Theater on January 9th 1947.

Not considered a flop, Street Scene was not a hit either; running only 148 performances it closed on May 17th, 1947.

Weill’s Street Scene won the first Tony award given for best original score.
Street Scene on Film

Produced by Samuel Goldwyn, Street Scene was released on September 5th, 1931.

The film was directed by King Vidor in black and white.

Starring Sylvia Sidney, William Collier Jr., Estelle Taylor, and David Landau.

Elmer Rice adapted his original play for the screenplay.

Hell's Kitchen

The location of Street Scene takes place in Hell's Kitchen, a New York City neighborhood, which sits east of Times Square area. There are several tales on how it got its name, most as colorful as they are varied.

Hell's Kitchen began as a neighborhood for poor and working-class Irish immigrants and later became a mixed bag of cultures and ethnicities, including Italian and African-American.

During prohibition it was a horde for gangsters and rumrunners. The gang and mobster mentality continued into the 1950s.

Hell's Kitchen is also the location of the beloved musical West Side Story.

1937 Worldview

The setting of Street Scene is never indicated in either Rice’s original script nor Well’s musical version. We can only assume Rice set his plot in 1929; at the time it was written.

Well’s musical adaptation was written in 1947 and included references to that later date. Between the two versions of Street Scene, the Great Depression and World War II occur, changing the American worldview deeply.

UMD’s production crew did much research and decided to set this version of Street Scene in 1937. After the depression and before the War, it seemed a more fitting time period than after the War when the American mood was more positive.
American Worldview in 1937

In 1937 Franklin Delano Roosevelt (D) was inaugurated into his second term.

He was the first chief executive to be inaugurated on January 20th instead of on March 4th.

In February he proposed increasing the number of Supreme Court justices. Critics charged that he was attempting to ‘Pack the Court,’ to create a court more favorable to his New Deal. In July the Senate would reject his proposal.

On April 27th the Roosevelt administration began distributing the first Social Security checks.

On May 1st Roosevelt signs an act of neutrality, keeping the United States out of World War II.

Important U.S. Events in early 1937

January 19th: Howard Hughes sets transcontinental flight record
January 13th: United States bars Americans from serving in the Spanish War.
January 27th: the Ohio River crested almost 30 feet above flood stage. This left one million people homeless and 385 dead. The Mississippi River crested at 14.8 meters leaving 37 dead in Arkansas.
February 11th: The United Automobile Workers Union is recognized by GM after a 44 day sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan.
March 1st: US Steel raises worker’s wages to $5 per day
April 12th: The US Supreme Court rules that the 1935 National Labor Relations Act is unconstitutional.
May 26th: After 4 years of construction, the Golden Gate bridge is opened for traffic.
May 30th: The Memorial Day Massacre occurs when police open fire on strike sympathizers after Republic Steel refuses to sign a collective bargaining agreement with the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.
July: Amelia Earhart disappears over the Pacific Ocean.
August 25th: Pullman company signs a contract with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, one of the first victories for African-American workers.

World Leaders in 1937

China - Chairman of the National Government, Lin Sen
England - King George VI; Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin
Germany - Chancellor Adolf Hitler
Italy - Prime Minister, Benito Mussolini
Japan - Kokka Hirota, then Senjuro Hayashi, then Fumimaro Konoe
Russia - General Secretary of the Central Committee, Joseph Stalin
Sweden - King Gustaf V; Prime Minister, Per Albin Hansson
United States - Franklin Delano Roosevelt
**Important World Events of Early 1937**

**January 13th** Nationalist in Poland riot, beating up Jews. Poland's prime minister declares there would be no problem if Poland only had 50,000 Jews, but he claims there are 3 million.

**January 23rd** 17 people go on trial in Moscow during Joseph Stalin's "Great Purge." In an effort to appear legal, Stalin tried his opponents, then sent them to concentration camps. These events are often called "Stalin's Terror."

**January** Arab riots spread across Palestine against British colonial rule, demanding independence and demonstrating opposition to mass Jewish immigration.

**January 30th** Hitler withdraws Germany from the Versailles Treaty, which ended World War I.

**April 26th** Hitler sends German planes to Spain helping fascist General Francisco Franco overthrow the communist Popular Front regime. The planes attacked the Basque town of Guernica killing as many as 1,500 civilians. This attack inspired Pablo Picasso's great work Guernica.

**July 7th** Skirmishes between Japanese and Chinese troops began the second Sino-Japanese war. This conflict, known as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident began the Japanese invasion of China and became the seed to World War II's Pacific conflicts.

**July 15th** Buchwald concentration camp is opened for male German political prisoners. In 1938 Jews would begin to arrive there.

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**Tenement Interior Research**

If you can ignore the body, look about the room of this New York tenement house.

Cameras were not widely available to lower income families at the turn of the century. By the 1930's that was perhaps beginning to change.

This photograph dates prior to 1937, but illustrates the New York Tenement Museum's use of police photographs to research and document the interiors of the tenement buildings in New York City.
Immigration in the 1930s

As immigration into Ellis Island slowed in the 1930’s, it became a place of denunciation and deportation.

Immigrants in rural areas, especially Mexican migrant workers, began moving into urban areas.

European Jews found it very difficult to emigrate. Caught in a catch 22, visas were required to book a passage to America, while a booking on a ship to America was required to apply for a visa. This forced many to stay in other European countries such as France and the Netherlands, where the German conquest eventually found them.

Popular films in 1937

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs  A Star is Born
A Day at the Races  Lost Horizon
Broadway Melody of 1938  Topper
Shirley Temple’s Heidi
The 9th Academy Award for Best Picture went to The Great Ziegfeld.

Popular Music of 1937

Sing, Sing, Sing, Benny Goodman and his Orchestra
One O’clock Jump, Count Basie and his Orchestra
They Can’t Take That Away from Me, Billie Holiday
They Can’t Take That Away from Me, Fred Astaire
Nice Work if You Can Get It, The Andrews Sisters,
Dear Mr. Gable: You Made Me Love You, Judy Garland

Popular Books Published in 1937

The Hobbit, J. R. R. Tolkien
Out of Africa, Karen Blixen
Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck
The Year, Virginia Wolfe
Death on the Nile, Agatha Christie
To Have and Have Not, Ernest Hemingway
Gone With the Wind, Margaret Mitchell - wins Pulitizer prize

Plays Written in 1937

Golden Boy, Clifford Odets
Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck
You Can’t Take It with You, Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman

Popular Radio shows

The Lone Ranger
Amos and Andy
Green Hornet
Shadow
Billie McGee and Molly
Glenn Miller Show
Tommy Dorsey Orchestra
Bing Crosby
“Hallelujah for Ice Cream”

Langston Hughes-Street Scene

“In times of famine, war, and extreme hardship people have been known to eat things they might not consider during ‘normal’ times. According to the food historians, the Great Depression was not such a period. Why? There was an ample, inexpensive food supply. People struggling to put food on the table had the option of purchasing lesser grades of meat (chuck instead of sirloin steak), cheaper cuts of animal (heart, brains, feet), and manufactured substitutes (Crisco instead of butter). Folks who needed help were served by private soup kitchens and government programs. These services were in place throughout the country. This was a decade of cutting back, not starvation.”


Referenced Works

We are the people who have long known in actual practice, the meaning of the word Fascism…Yes, we Negroes in America do not have to be told what Fascism is in action. We know. Its theories of Nordic supremacy and economic suppression have long been realities to us.

—Langston Hughes at the International Writers Congress in Paris 1937.

Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt
A simple way to take measure of a country is to look at how many want in...And how many want out.”

—Tony Blair

The ones who crossed the oceans, who brought with us to America the villages of Russia and Lithuania...so that you would not grow up here, in this strange place, in the melting pot where nothing melted.

—Rabbi Isidor Chernelwitz in Tony Kushner’s, Angels in America
“What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.”

—Geographer Y.F. Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience

“We are not made wise by the recollection of our past, but the responsibility of our future.

—George Bernard Shaw
Preservation of one’s own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.

—Cesar Chavez

The land flourished because it was fed from so many sources—because it was nourished by so many cultures and traditions and peoples.

—Lyndon B. Johnson, U.S. President
I have a gentle beef with one of your phrases. Although I was born in Germany, I do not consider myself a ‘German composer.’ The Nazis obviously did not consider me as such either, and I left their country.

—Kurt Weill, in a letter to the editor of Life magazine after a feature story about Street Scene in 1947.

In time, foods such as hamburgers and ice cream became more than just meals. They became part of American history and culture, touchstones that are almost nostalgic and sentimental no matter how old you are or what part of the country you are from.

—Homaro Cantu, chef and molecular gastronomer
The play itself lends itself to a variety of music, just like the streets of New York themselves embrace the music of many lands and many people.

—Kurt Weill

Stuff is of little importance. The accumulation of love for each other, for our children and of life-long friends and extending that love to those less fortunate than we have been is the centerpiece of our lives, of humanity and civilization.

—Steve, The Legacy Project
If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday.

—Pearl S. Buck, Nobel Peace Prize for literature

But then I came to the conclusion that no, while there may be an immigration problem, it isn’t really a serious problem. The really serious problem is assimilation.

—Samuel Huntington
We are not made wise by the recollection of our past, but the responsibility of our future.

—George Bernard Shaw

I was excited by the concept of a large number of different individuals whose behavior and relationships were largely conditioned by their accidental common occupancy of a looming architectural pile.

—Elmer Rice of Street Scene
The world can forgive practically anything except people who mind their own business.

—Margaret Mitchell

Hitler was good in the beginning, but he went too far.

—Marge Schott
All that I know about my great-grandparents is that they were natives of Germany. For me family life begins with my grandparents, all of whom emigrated to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.

—Elmer Rice

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

—Langston Hughes
I have a gentle bee with one of your phylacteries. Although I was born in Germany, I do not consider myself a German composer. The term obviously does not consider me as such either, and it is not my fault.
American World in 1972

In 1972, Earl Warren became the 19th Chief Justice of the United States, a position he held until 1981. Warren, born in Sperryville, Virginia, was noted for his moderate and pragmatic approach to legal issues. He served as a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court from 1953 to 1969. During his tenure as Chief Justice, Warren pursued a conservative approach to the law, which some saw as a return to the original intent of the Constitution.

Walter Brandt/
Walter Brandt