



Cornell University

PMA 1133 | Spring 2017

# Sex Acts: American Drama 1950-Present

**Jayne Kilburn**

PhD Student, Performing and Media Arts

Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30AM-12:30PM



## Course Readings:

Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, Gay and Lesbian Drama by Sara Warner

Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, Radical Acts Introduction

Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Essays by your Radical Acts subject, Due: Hemispheric Essay

Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, Essays by your Radical Acts subject, Due: Radical Acts Rough Draft

Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, A Streetcar Named Desire, Due: Radical Acts Mini-Research Paper and Presentation

Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, When a door is ajar by Anne Fleche and Communist Cowboys and Queers Excerpt by David Savran

Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, Belle Reprieve plus Case Intro and Memories of a Revolution Interview

*Tuesday, February 21st - Fall break*

Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Performative Acts by Butler and The Feminist Spectator as Critic by Jill Dolan

Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, Due: Streetcar Essay Rough Draft

Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Clit Notes by Holly Hughes, Hello Sex Kitty by Denise Uyera and Between the Personal and the Universal

Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, Due: Final Draft Streetcar Essay

Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, E. Patrick Johnson Intro and Excerpts

Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, Due: Story of Self Draft and Analytical Essay Topic and Brief Outline

Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, Angels in America

Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, Roy Cohn / Jack Vawter, Due: Story of Self Final Draft

Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, For Colored Girls

Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, Due: Rough Draft Analytical Research Paper

Thursday, March 30th, For Colored Girls

*April 1-10th—Spring Break*

Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, Love/Conjure Blues and the Jazz Aesthetic

Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, Due: Second Draft Analytical Essay

Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, Due: Final Draft Analytical Essay

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>

April 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, Play Presentations

Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, Class review and wrap up

## Summary of Assignments:

Hard copies of assignments are due in class.

<b>Writing</b>
<b>Hemispheric Essay (2-3 pages)</b> <b>Due: Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Radical Acts Mini-Research Paper and Presentation (3-4 pages)</b> <b>Rough Draft Due (peer reviewed only):</b> <b>Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Final Due: Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Streetcar Essay (4-5 pages)</b> <b>Rough Draft: Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Final Draft: Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Story of Self</b> <b>Rough Draft: Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Final Draft: Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Analytical Research Paper (6-7 pages)</b> <b>Topic and Brief Outline Due: Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Rough Draft: Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Second Draft (peer reviewed only): Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Final Draft: Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>10-Minute Play</b> <b>Rough Draft: April 25, 27, May 2, 4</b> <b>Final Due: Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup> (with portfolio)</b>
<b>Portfolio:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A course reflection</li><li>• Final play draft</li><li>• Revised essays of your choice</li><li>• All essays (with drafts) in chronological order</li></ul> <b>Due: Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup></b>

**Course Texts:**

All texts will be posted on blackboard under the “Content” tab.

**Course Description and Rationale:**

This course asks: how does sex in theater and performance contribute to our understandings of identity, power, and the community?

Focusing on how desire is manifested through text, the actor, and the audience, this class will engage in scholarship and plays that use camp, personal narratives, realism, and experimental techniques in order to engage its subject. Who is the play being written for? How does the style of play manipulate the audience’s reception of it? Is the playwright creating a community amongst the audience or ostracizing them? What methodologies is the playwright utilizing? How does the reader feel when they read the play? Why?

Drawing on theoretical lenses from theatre and performance studies as well as gender and sexuality studies and race/ethnic studies, students will read, view, and respond to a range of dramatic texts that revolve around sex, sexuality, and gender. Students will develop critical voices both in their writing assignments and in their in-class discussions. Focusing on issues of gender and sexuality as it appears in play scripts (and, implicitly, on stage), this course will discuss how representations of sex in theater and performance contribute to and challenge prevalent understandings of theater history, intimacy, and what “good” and “bad” theater is. We will work, through close readings, discussion, and live theatre attendance, to develop strong interpretive and descriptive skills and a shared critical vocabulary.

During the semester will emphasize writing and its fundamental relationship to reading, thinking, and learning. You will learn how to read perceptively, think critically, and respond appropriately and coherently to college-level reading by writing a variety of essays ranging from short response papers to more complex argument papers and evaluations of the claims and evidence in multiple readings. The best writing takes time and effort, so your essays for this class will be developed in stages with peer review, in-class workshopping, and ‘progress’ assignments being conducted along the way.

## **Course Policies:**

### **Citizenship**

We cannot have rich, multi-layered discussions about your writing unless you attend and actively participate during class and scheduled appointments. You are expected to be a considerate citizen: arrive on time, treat others with respect, and be prepared to work.

*Free pass: two absences.*

### **Deadlines**

All work is due on the designated due date unless alternative arrangements have been made with me *in advance*. Poor attendance, weak participation, or homework cannot be made up. Should extenuating circumstances arise, *please* communicate clearly and promptly with me.

*Free pass: two late assignments (up to four days late)*

### **Guidelines for Submission of Written Work**

No hand-written work will be accepted; all assignments should be typed and submitted in hard copy. All essays should be formatted as follows:

- Your name and the date at the top right or top left corner.
- Essay title centered below your name
- One-inch margins; left-justified
- 12-pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced
- page numbers
- stapled
- MLA citation style: if you use any source in your essay (even if it is a text or other object we have used in class), you should include a Works Cited list at the end of your paper.

### **Drafts**

- Bring copies of all assignments to class for peer review.
- Keep all of your work for this class. Date and save all informal and formal texts, including notes, freewrites, brainstorming and drafts. Number your drafts; don't copy over them.

**Learning Outcomes:**

As this course is also a theatre course, you will be learning how to read, talk about, and understand plays. Approaching a play text analytically is a key part of dramaturgy, but in addition we will also be focusing on placing plays in the context of performance and discussing their political implications. By the end of the course you should have a basic understanding of dramaturgical analysis and a broader knowledge of the issues associated with the representation of culture and identity on stage.

By the end of the semester you will demonstrate growing competency in:

- designing and implementing a viable writing plan,
  - crafting a persuasive argument,
  - composing an effective thesis,
  - organizing a coherent and well-developed essay,
  - synthesizing and integrating source material,
  - applying appropriate citation conventions,
  - creating grammatically correct, stylized, and rhetorically effective sentences, and
- revising writing appropriate for diverse audiences and purposes.

## Course Expectations

To meet course learning outcomes and earn academic credit this semester, you must:

- attend class regularly—not missing more than 2 classes;
- meet due dates and writing criteria for all major assignments;
- participate in all in-class exercises and activities;
- complete all informal writing assignments;
- give thoughtful peer feedback during Writers' Workshops and work faithfully with peers on other collaborative tasks;
- sustain effort and investment on each draft of all papers;
- make substantive revisions to drafts—extending or changing the thinking or organization—not just editing or touching up;
- copy-edit all final revisions of main assignments until they conform to the conventions of edited, academic English;
- attend weekly writing consultations to discuss drafts;
- submit your final portfolio.

On writing specifically, you must:

- seek perplexity in your writing, some genuine question or puzzlement;
- use your writing to do some figuring-out (An essay needs to move or go somewhere. It needs to have a progression of thinking.

Course Expectations developed by Peter Elbow and Jane Danielwicz as presented in:

Elbow, Peter and Jane Danielewicz. "A Unilateral Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching." College Composition and Communication 61.2 (December 2009).

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### Blackboard Responses:

For each reading I will post a question or series of questions for you to answer on Blackboard in the discussion section. These are freewrites and will not be graded. This is a chance for you to think through ideas and formulate arguments.

### **Attendance Policy: Classes and Conferences**

Because this is a seminar course, which relies on the consistent presence and participation of its members to sustain our ongoing discussion, you must attend class each day. If you miss more than two classes, your grade will be affected. Exceptions to the attendance policy include family emergencies, observance of religious holidays, and documented medical issues. Should you need to miss class for any of the aforementioned reasons, please email Jayme (jlk355@cornell.edu) in advance of class to explain your absence. Please note that excessive lateness will also result in a final grade penalty (three lates = one absence).

Each student will have two required, individual conferences with the instructor to discuss his/her/their/ze writing. The conferences will be held in my office on the 4th floor of the Schwartz Center (Room 420). We will set the first conference schedule as soon as class enrollment solidifies: I will send out a schedule of available conference times, and you are responsible for choosing an appointment during conference week(s). I am also available to meet with students outside of class during office hours or by appointment.

### **Grading Policy**

You will get a grade in the B range (B-, B, or B+) in this class if you fulfill all the requirements and produce fully satisfactory writing. If your writing is outstanding, you'll receive some version of an A. If you do not fulfill the requirements or your work is inadequate, your grade will suffer. I will notify you if your work starts falling below the B range. Plagiarism on any one assignment may result in failing the course.

### **University Policies and Regulations**

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

It is critical that you submit only your own, original work for this class, and that you follow scrupulously appropriate academic standards for acknowledging the work of others in your writing and research. Information on proper documentation can be found in The Little Seagull Handbook. Please use MLA documentation for this class.

The Code of Academic Integrity is found in the Policy Notebook for the Cornell Community and also on the web at <http://www.theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/AcadInteg/code.html>.

Students understand that by taking this course they agree to share their writing with others in the class for purposes of peer review and related exercises.

Students are prohibited from buying or selling course materials connected with this class. All course materials, including all reading/viewing/listening materials as well as lectures, assignments, syllabi, and related instructional materials, are protected by copyright. Without the express, written permission of the instructor, any buying or selling of course materials is unauthorized and constitutes classroom dishonesty.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, please provide me with an accommodation notification letter from Student Disability Services. Students are expected to give notice of the need for accommodations within the first three days of instruction. If you need immediate accommodations or physical access, please arrange to meet with me within the first two class meetings.