

Carthage College: Department of Theatre
Fall Term 2021

Instructor: Prof. Maureen Chavez-Kruger
Email: mchavezkruger@carthage.edu
Office Location: DSC 60
Office Hours: Thursdays 2:15pm- 3:15pm

Class Location: Clausen Center 106
Meeting Dates: Tuesday- Thursday
Meeting Time: 9:50am- 11:30am

Course Title

THR200D01: American Social Problem Plays (FAR)

Catalog Course Description

A survey study of American plays in the 20th and 21st century that reflect the political and social changes in American society. Plays will be analyzed in relation to their historical and social context, and in relation to social issues through literature.

Course Description

In this survey study of American plays in the 20th and 21st century, students will investigate several significant time periods reflecting political and social change in American society. To develop a meaningful understanding and discourse, this class will be based on four prominent plays: *Paragon Springs* by Steven Dietz, *Fences* by August Wilson, *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner, and *The Ghosts of Lute Bravo* by Hilary Bettis. Each playwright developed a play centered around themes that speak to the time in which they were written but also resonate to present day. The instructor will provide an introduction of each play and empower students to actively engage in the quest to uncover the relationships between their specific time periods and explore the reason each play was written. As an additional component to our class structure, we will open our classroom to guest speakers from our community and visit organizations that advocate and support the political and social issues discussed in the classroom.

Table Reads

Table Readings are an integral part of our classroom experience and allow us to fully embrace the words of the playwright. Attendance and participation are mandatory. See class schedule for dates.

Student-Led Seminar Discussions

These sessions create a unique opportunity to actively engage students in meaningful discussions of the theatrical scripts explored throughout the semester. Discussion documents: Script Wondering Chart and Group Generated Questions Chart.

Historical Research

To better understand the world of each play, students will be asked to research and present historical topics. Instructor will provide group topics and assign student groups. Student groups will present their topics in a PowerPoint format.

News Articles Series

To strengthen our connection and to transcend the themes of the selected plays through a 21st century lens, each student is required to research and present one current news article reflecting the selected theme explored in each play. On the day of presentations, students should be prepared to discuss the content and relevance of the article.

Dramatic Plot Structure

Student will demonstrate their ability to breakdown the dramatic structure of each script by using a plot diagram. A plot diagram is an organizational tool used to map the events in a story. The mapping of plot structure allows the student to visualize the key features of a story.

Experiential Learning

Throughout the semester, students will have the opportunity to enrich our classroom experience with site visits and special guest speakers. The onsite/virtual visits and quest speakers will broaden our understanding of the themes explored within our readings: Jones Island Water Reclamation Facility, Milwaukee Black Holocaust Museum, Aids Resource Center of Wisconsin, and the LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin. *Attendance is mandatory.*

Experiential Learning Reflections

Students are required to submit a written response to a prompt provided by instructor. The prompts will be tailored to each unique experiential learning component. See Class Schedule for Schoology submission date. MLA format required.

Artistic Exploration

Students will have the opportunity to explore their artistic skills that go beyond written work by creating visual responses to selected scripts.

Fences Collage Response

Students are asked to create a two- dimensional response to prompt provided by the instructor.

The Box Project

Students will be required to transform a three- dimensional object into a representation of a character, line, song, poem, passage, scene, or significant moment within their favorite play explored during the semester.

Required Scripts

Students are required to purchase three scripts through the Carthage Bookstore by Thursday, September 9.

- *Paragon Springs* by Steven Dietz
- *Fences*, August Wilson
- *Angels in America, A Gay Fantasia on National Themes, Part One: Millennium Approaches*, Tony Kushner.

**The Ghosts of Lote Bravo* by Hilary Bettis will be provided by the instructor on the first day of class

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students should:

- Demonstrate the breakdown of the dramatic structure of a script.
- Analyze a script for the purpose of a clear understanding of structure, content, and physical requirements.
- Apply critical-thinking to understand the role of historical period research and its ability to bring us into the world of each script.
- Identify political and social issues presented in each play and recognize those issues in our world today.
- Appreciate theatre as a distinct art form.
- Respond to a play with written responses and visual representation.

Course Requirements

Attendance Policies

Note: *As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to affect our work, the faculty are committed to accommodating any unavoidable absences that may occur as a result. The policies below act as our general guidelines, but we recognize that allowances may need to be made to them. Please contact your instructors and discuss specific accommodations that may need to be made.*

Factors that will help us work through potential extended absences:

- Communicating with the instructor: don't disappear! Make sure you let your instructors know if something is going on.
- Keeping up with classwork as much as possible: even if you are unable to attend a class, you must make every effort to check with classmates and the instructor to find out what work is due and arrange to turn it in at a later date.
- Refer to the *Theatre Departmental Attendance Policy Document* for more information. This document can be found in the "Syllabus/Class Schedule" folder in Schoology.

Statement on Officially Excused Absences

When a student is absent from class:

- (1) due to a medical issue that has been confirmed by a doctor and/or the Dean of Students' Office; or
 - (2) because of participation at an official Carthage event as part of their membership in a Carthage organization or membership on a Carthage athletic team, instructors are expected to make reasonable accommodations that allow students to address missed class time and/or missed work related to their absence. Any faculty/staff member sponsoring a Carthage event that requires students to be away from class is expected to notify instructors in advance. Students participating in these events are expected to make the arrangements in advance to make up missed work. If an instructor has any questions about what constitutes reasonable accommodations, please consult with either your department chair or your division chair for clarification.
- If a student misses a class, they must present an excuse from the campus nurse or have their doctor email the instructor a legal medical excuse.

Coursework

This course covers mature themes and subject matter. Trust must be earned and honored at all times in this class. Any student who exploits or breaks the boundaries of trust will undermine the whole class and could result in that student's dismissal from the class. This includes insensitive language, unwarranted or inappropriate behavior.

- Students need to be prepared for each class. Refer to the *Class Schedule* document for content of instruction and materials required for each class session.
- Students must complete all required coursework. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in the failure of the course.
- Late assignments will be marked down 20%. Students need to discuss the extended deadline for turning in late work with instructor.
- Students may follow their progress online for this course using *Schoology*. The class syllabus, schedule, and pertinent documents will be posted on the site. It will also be useful to keep track of grades and submission of assignments.

- MLA formatting is required for all written assignments.
- Students must be present for final exam.

Basic Needs Policy

Student safety and well-being is more important than anything in this class. Please feel free to reach out to me if you are struggling for any reason – including issues securing food, housing, or personal safety. In addition to any support I can provide, I will work hard to help you find every resource available to you at Carthage.

Models of Etiquette for In- Person Class Sessions

Do not come to in-person class if you are exhibiting any of the Covid-19 symptoms. Please refer to the #StaySafeCarthage website for all Covid-19 information.

- Wear a mask at all times. There will be no exceptions.
- Use hand sanitizer when entering the classroom.
- Work with instructor to create a safe and welcoming learning environment.
- Adhere to social distancing protocol of six feet distance from instructor and peers.
- To eliminate mask removal, no food or drink in the classroom will be reinforced.
- Silence cell phones at the beginning of each class session.

Participation and Etiquette Grade

The *participation and etiquette* grade will be reflective of three components: student’s participation in class discussions, student’s participation in *Experiential Learning* events and student’s ability to follow the required in-person class models of etiquette stated in class syllabus.

Assignments and Grading

Course grade is based on a 600 points system. Grades will be based on the percentage of points earned throughout the semester.

Script Wondering Chart- <i>Paragon Springs</i>	20pts.
Group Generated Questions Chart- <i>Paragon Springs</i>	40pts.
Script Wondering Chart- <i>Fences</i>	30pts.
Group Generated Questions Chart- <i>Fences</i>	60pts.
Script Wondering Chart- <i>Angels in America</i>	30pts.
Group Generated Questions Chart- <i>Angels in America</i>	60pts.
Script Wondering Chart- <i>Ghosts of Lote Bravo</i>	10pts.
Group Generated Questions Chart- <i>Ghosts of Lote Bravo</i>	20pts.
Plot Diagram 4 @ 10pts. each	40pts.
Historical Research Presentation 4 @ 20pts. each	80pts.
Experiential Learning Reflection 4 @ 10pts. each	40pts.
News Article Series 4 @ 10pts. each	40pts.
<i>Fences</i> Collage Response	25pts.
The Box Project	55pts.
Participation and Etiquette @Midterm	25pts.
Participation and Etiquette @Finals	25pts.

*Students are required to attend all experimental learning visits and lectures.

Grade Scale

Grades are based on the percentage of points earned during the semester.

A+	99-100%	B-	83-80%	D	64-67%
A	94-98%	C+	78-79%	D-	63-60%
A-	90-93%	C	74-77%	F	Below 60%
B+	88-89%	C-	73-70%		
B	84-87%	D+	68-69%		

Learning Accessibility

Students with special learning needs are encouraged to reach out to me during the first week of classes to discuss appropriate accommodations and support. You should also have documentation on file with Diane Schowalter in the Advising Center (x5802.) This information will be kept confidential.

Carthage College strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to your disability (including mental health, learning disorders and chronic medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you also need to register with Diane Schowalter in Learning Accessibility Services (dschowalter1@carthage.edu).

Health and Counseling Center

The Health and Counseling Center (HCC) supports students by addressing physical, mental, and emotional well-being. All services are free and confidential and are available to currently enrolled, full-time undergraduate students. Health services include the assessment and treatment of minor illness and injury. Diagnostic testing, complimentary over-the-counter medications, and referrals to off-campus providers are all available. Our licensed counselors help students with challenges that can be resolved with short-term, solution-focused counseling. Some topics discussed during counseling include depression and anxiety, traumatic experiences, gender and sexuality, relationship concerns, stress management, and academic challenges. More details - including info about appointments - can be found at carthage.edu/health-counseling.

[Uwill](http://Uwill.com) is a free teletherapy platform for Carthage students. Uwill connects students with licensed therapists from all 50 states. Support is available in a variety of formats -- video, chat, messaging, or phone. Counselors are available nights, weekends, and during holidays. Access is quick and easy: app.uwill.com.

Suggested email signature: Students receive free, immediate access to teletherapy through Uwill. It's private, secure & confidential. Click [here](#) to get started.

HCC Hours and Location

TARC 2240 / 262-551-5710

M-F 8:30-4:00

Health Services (in-person): Call to schedule a same-day appointment; walk-ins accepted

Counseling Services (in-person): Call to schedule an appointment; walk-ins accepted M-F 11:30-1:00

**Services, hours, and walk-in availability are subject to change*

Additional Info

--Nurse Practitioner: Wednesdays 2pm-4pm (appointment required; NP services are provided by a third party and billed to student's insurance)

--HCC is a Title IX confidential resource for students.

--We provide consultation for faculty and staff. If you need to talk to a provider, call our office at 262-551-5710.

--COVID-19 Testing is available for students with signs or symptoms of illness. Please call to be screened and to schedule a testing time.

--Carthage's vaccine requirement and associated testing is not administered by HCC. Visit the [COVID-19 Update Page](#) for more information.

Academic Misconduct

Students are subject to disciplinary action for violations of academic integrity, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or other academic misconduct, as stated in the student handbook.

The content of the syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion