



DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS

COURSE OUTLINE – DR1020 A3 WINTER 2014

PLAY ANALYSIS – T, TH 10:00 AM – 11:20 AM

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Michelle MacArthur **PHONE:** 780-539-2882
OFFICE: L222 **E-MAIL:** mmacarthur@gprc.ab.ca

OFFICE HOURS: M&W 10:00 AM – 11:30AM, T&TH 11:30AM – 1:00PM

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: none

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

1. *Postcolonial Plays: An Anthology* (available for purchase at the bookstore)
2. *Scorched* by Wadji Mouawad (available for purchase at the bookstore)
3. supplemental readings, posted on Moodle

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

How does a play go from being words on a page to action on a stage? In this course we will look critically at play texts from diverse cultures from the 1970's to the present to discover how they work creatively in performance. We will explore theatre styles and contexts, basic scenography, actors' challenges, the director's vision, and audience reception, in class discussion and through the attendance of at least two live theatrical performances. We will also endeavour to have theatre artists come to class to talk about their work.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3(3-0-0) (45 hours/term)

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture and Class Discussion

OBJECTIVES (OPTIONAL):

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- analyze the artistic choices and material conditions that shape a play's journey from page to stage;
- envision how a play works creatively in performance based on a close reading of its text and a consideration of artistic, social, and historical contexts;
- develop a coherent and holistic production plan;
- apply ideas of post-colonialism to the analysis of plays from Canada and diverse cultures around the globe;
- produce critical writing about live performance.

TRANSFERABILITY:

** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A⁺	4.0	90 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 89	
A⁻	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B⁺	3.3	77 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 76	GOOD
B⁻	2.7	70 – 72	
C⁺	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	63 – 66	
C⁻	1.7	60 – 62	
D⁺	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

EVALUATIONS:

Play Pitch	20%
Production Analysis	25%
Midterm Test	15%
Final Exam	30%
Participation	10%

Detailed assignment guidelines will be distributed in class; brief descriptions are provided below.

Play Pitch

Together with a partner, you will create a pitch for local producers (the class and instructor) to fund and mount your play in Grande Prairie's 2014-15 theatre season. Your pitch will outline your directorial and design vision, interpretation of the play, casting choices, and budget breakdown. Key to the success of your pitch will be your ability to answer the question "Why stage *this* play *now* in Grande Prairie?" Additionally, you will present a five-minute scene from the play to illustrate your vision. You may borrow costumes and props from the drama department to stage your scene, and you may also call on your classmates to act in your scene—indeed, you will be expected to help your peers out by taking turns as actors.

Production Analysis

You will each be assigned to a local production, where you will have the opportunity to observe a select number of rehearsals (3-4), interview members of the cast and creative team, and watch the final production. You will write short entries about the rehearsal process and final production, posting them to a (private) class blog, with the goal of describing and analyzing how artistic choices and material conditions shape a play's journey from page to stage. While you are required to attend each of the productions covered in the class, you are only responsible for writing about your own assigned production.

Midterm Test

An open book, in-class exam aimed to test your critical engagement with the material. The test will consist of short answer questions.

Final Exam

Held during the final exam period and similar to the midterm model, this test will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Participation

This class balances lecture with seminar-style discussion, and as such your active participation is needed for its success. Active participation entails showing up regularly and on time with required course materials (i.e. readings, plays, copies of your reviews when necessary), demonstrating engagement with the readings, participating in class discussions, contributing to the Moodle glossary (3%), and actively and respectfully listening to your peers. Two percent of this grade will be awarded for a passing mark on the syllabus quiz (>6/10), administered during the second week of class.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to be fully prepared for class having done the reading assigned. Missing class will seriously impact student ability to succeed in the course. Cell phones must be turned off and stored away during class.

Late assignments will be penalized by 5% per day. Assignments, including midterm and final exams, will not be made up unless students have proper medical documentation.

Students are responsible for play admission and field trip expenses. Whenever possible, we will aim to attend free dress rehearsals. If ticket price becomes an obstacle, please notify the instructor in advance so we can make arrangements to accommodate.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/**

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

WEEK 1

Jan. 7 Introduction: Play Analysis and Po-Co

Jan. 9 Play Analysis

Knowles, Ric. "Theory: Towards a Materialist Semiotics." *Reading the Material*

Theatre. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print. 9-23.

---. "The Stratford Festival." *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge; New York:

Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print. 105-28.

WEEK 2

Jan. 14&16 Tomson Highway, *The Rez Sisters* (access through Moodle) – Act I

Gilbert, Helen and Joanne Tompkins. "Introduction: Reacting to Empire."

Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics. London; New York: Routledge,

1996. Web. 1-14. (access through the library website)
Syllabus Quiz! (Jan. 16)

WEEK 3

Jan. 21 Tomson Highway, *The Rez Sisters* – Act II

Jan. 23 *Play Pitch Model: The Rez Sisters*

WEEK 4

Jan. 28 Manjula Padmanabhan, *Harvest*

Jan. 30 *Play Pitch: Harvest*

WEEK 5

Feb. 4 *Visitor in the Arts: Richie Wilcox*

Feb. 6 Manjula Padmanabhan, *Harvest*

WEEK 6

Feb. 11 Guillermo Verdecchia, *Fronteras Americanas*

Feb. 13 *Play Pitch: Fronteras Americanas*

READING WEEK (FEB. 17-21) ☺☺☺

WEEK 7

Feb. 25 Guillermo Verdecchia, *Fronteras Americanas*

Feb. 27 *Midterm Exam*

WEEK 8

Mar. 4 Sistren Theatre Collective, *QPH*

Mar. 6 *Play Pitch: QPH*

WEEK 9

Mar. 11&13 Sistren Theatre Collective, *QPH*

WEEK 10

Mar. 18 Wajdi Mouawad, *Scorched*

Mar. 20 *Play Pitch: Scorched*

WEEK 11

Mar. 25&27 Wajdi Mouawad, *Scorched*
Film Screening: Incendies (2010)

WEEK 12

Apr. 1 Jane Taylor, *Ubu and the Truth Commission*

Apr. 3 *Play Pitch: Ubu and the Truth Commission*

WEEK 13

Apr. 8 Jane Taylor, *Ubu and the Truth Commission*

Apr. 10 Wrap-Up and Exam Prep