Course Objectives:

- To (re)view history/historiography of feminist theory/criticism (An overview of foundational texts in the field, accompanied by current critical trends)
- To explore multiple definitions and tenets of feminism(s) and their application in play analysis
- To consider the efficacy of feminist principles in production

Required Texts/Reading will be drawn from:

- Elaine Aston, *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre*
- Gayle Austin, *Feminist Theories for Dramatic Criticism*
- Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*

Required Plays:

- Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*
- Sarah Kane, *4.48 Psychosis*
- Marsha Norman, *’Night, Mother*
- Lynn Nottage, *Intimate Apparel*
- Suzan Lori-Parks, *In the Blood*
- Wendi Wasserstein, *The Heidi Chronicles, Uncommon Women and Others,* and *Isn’t It Romantic?*
- Kirsten Easton, *Wife/Worker/Whore* (will be distributed or posted on D2L)

Play(s) of choice for final paper (may be from any period, form or style, including devised theatre and/or solo performance; could be a well-documented creative project such as an original script or performance).

Supplementary materials will be provided in class (ex. Elaine Aston’s Intro to Sue Ellen Case’s *Feminism and the Theatre*, excerpts from Case’s *Feminist and Queer Performance*, essays, or excerpts from other plays to be used in class) and posted on D2L.

University policies regarding plagiarism apply to this class, and it will be understood that unless cited, work is your own.

Recommended Reading:

- Elaine Aston, *Feminist Futures...*
- Sue-Ellen Case, *Feminism and Theatre, Feminist and Queer Performance*
- Ellen Donkin and Susan Clement, *Upstaging Big Daddy...*
Course Requirements:

- Attendance at all class meetings. This is an upper-level undergraduate/graduate-level class. Absence(s) with the exception of documented emergencies ONLY will result in the lowering of grades.
- Completion of all reading and writing assignments. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR THIS CLASS. NO “Incompletes” will be assigned except in the case of an emergency such as a death in the immediate family, accident, or illness (documented).**
- “Talking Points” assignments*
- Feminist Performance Response to Department of Theater Production *Wife/Worker/Whore**
- Abstract for Final Paper**
- Rough Draft for Final Paper***
- Final Paper****

*“Talking Points” assignments offer the opportunity to apply principles studied in manageable bite. They must be typed, but they may appear in the form of bullet points. They should demonstrate close reading of the texts and/or script(s) with emphasis on specificity with regard to examples (direct quotations, references to stage action, etc. with pg. numbers or Act/Scene). They should clearly state the critical lens(es) employed. Think of these as notes you might bring were you to teach a class. Length: Approx. 2 pages each

** Performance Response Essays will focus on how the concepts studied in class manifest onstage in production. They are not “reviews” with a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down”, but, rather, critical analyses of theories in practice, with live bodies on the stage speaking and moving through space. They may address production elements such as costumes, scenery, and lighting as they enhance (or do not) the impact of the feminist aspects of the script as written. They must include terminology used in class.

*** Abstracts should be no more than approx. 250-300 words and should clearly state your intentions for your paper. What play(s)? Which feminism(s) or aspects of feminist criticism? Why and how does your application work? **An abstract should become a road map for writing a paper.**

**** Rough Drafts, of course, are crucial to the development of carefully crafted arguments and lucid writing. In this class, they are prized above the final paper (See “Grading” below.). These are by no means meant to be sketchy or, on the other hand, over-written. **Consider the draft as the best version you can create at the time, ready for another pair of eyes or editor.**

***** Final Papers should be approx. 12 pages in length, double-spaced. As a conference paper, read at a reasonable rate, 12 pages translates as about 20 minutes. Papers must be narrow and focused in both form and content. You do not have time for a 4-page introduction
to critical theory or a lengthy plot summary. In-class time will be allotted to craft topics. It is always a good idea to look at other pieces by the playwrights covered. You may also turn to theatre history or combine your research with another project.

Grading:

- Talking Point Assignments 20%
- Performance Response Essay 10%
- Abstract 20%
- Rough Draft 30%
- Final Paper 20%

A note on the schedule: We will really read A LOT in the first weeks so that you have a range of options and approaches from which to choose for your Final Papers. The amount of reading will ease up a bit, the material covered will spiral back, articles will be read in class and work on individual projects will be allocated some class time.

Class Schedule (Subject to Change)
Readings are listed on the days for which they should be read.

WEEK ONE
Setting the Stage; Critical Terminology; the “Canon”

Tuesday  Jan. 19       Intro. to Course

Thursday  Jan. 21   Discuss: History/Historiography of Feminist Theory and Theatre; Touch on “recovery” and early feminist efforts re: the canon and theatre history studies; Materials distributed in class as needed.

WEEK TWO
Last day to drop or add a class without Dean’s signature Sunday, January 24

Tuesday  Jan. 26    **READING:** Jill Dolan, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2; Gayle Austin, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2
   **Discuss:** Terminology and concepts from reading
   Hand out Marsha Norman articles

Thursday  Jan. 28    **NO CLASS- ANNE** at Texas Educational Theatre Association

Last day to drop a full-term course with refund, Sunday January 31
WEEK THREE
Realism and Feminism in Theatre

Tuesday  Feb.2  
**READING:**  ‘Night, Mother; Marsha Norman articles; Austin, in Chapter 3 Death of a Salesman section and Chapter 4
**Discuss:** Feminist Criticism and ‘Night Mother; ‘Night, Mother; realism; representation; Mothers/Daughters; The Absent Male; Canon construction
**ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS:** Talking Points for ‘Night Mother

Thursday  Feb.4  
**READING:** Uncommon Women and Others and Wasserstein Articles
**ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS:** Talking Points for Uncommon Women and Others
**Discuss:** Talking Points; Women’s Goals & Aspirations; the Waves of Feminism and Wendy Wasserstein; Women, Work, and the Family

WEEK FOUR

Tuesday  Feb.9  
**READING:** Isn’t it Romantic?
**ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS:** Talking Points for Isn’t it Romantic?
**In-Class:** View Uncommon Women and Others if available

Thursday  Feb.11  
**READING:** The Heidi Chronicles
**In-Class:** View Interview with Wendy Wasserstein
**ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS:** Talking Points for The Heidi Chronicles

WEEK FIVE

Tuesday  Feb. 16  
**In-Class:** View The Heidi Chronicles if available
Wrap-Up Wasserstein

Thursday  Feb. 18  
If you remind me, Fletcher’s Feminist Birthday Party 😊

WEEK SIX

Tuesday  Feb.23  
**READING:** Intimate Apparel
**ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS:** Talking Points for Intimate Apparel

Thursday  Feb. 25  
Review Terminology

WEEK SEVEN

Tuesday  Mar. 1  
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Mar. 3</td>
<td><strong>In-Class</strong>: Maria Irene Fornes (Materials will be distributed in class)</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Mar. 8</td>
<td><strong>READING</strong>: <em>Top Girls</em> and Churchill articles</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS</strong>: Talking Points for <em>Top Girls</em></td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Mar. 10</td>
<td>Discuss Final Paper Topics</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK TEN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Challenging Realism; L'Ecriture Feminine</strong></td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Mar. 22</td>
<td><strong>READING</strong>: Possibly sections in Dolan and/or Aston TBA; <em>Wife/Worker/Whore</em></td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS</strong>: Play Selection for Final Paper</td>
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<td><strong>Discuss</strong>: Abstract Assignment</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Mar. 24</td>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS</strong>: Talking Points for <em>Wife/Worker/Whore</em></td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Mar. 29</td>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS</strong>: <em>In the Blood</em></td>
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<td><strong>Discuss</strong>: Suzan-Lori Parks and Abstracts</td>
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<td>Department of Theater Production <em>Wife/Worker/Whore</em> March 31st- April 3rd, along with 5 original staged readings of plays</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Mar. 31</td>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS</strong>: ABSTRACTS</td>
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<td>Share Abstracts in class; Revise</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK TWELVE</strong></td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Apr. 5</td>
<td><strong>READING</strong>: Psychosis 4.48</td>
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<td>Debrief Production</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS</strong>: REVISED ABSTRACTS FOR PAPERS</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Apr. 7</td>
<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS</strong>: Performance Response Essay on <em>Wife/Worker/Whore</em></td>
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**WEEK THIRTEEN**

Tuesday  Apr. 12  Wrap-Up Course Content

Thursday Apr.14  Work on Drafts of Final Papers in Class; Peer feedback; Discuss Research and Writing Issues

**WEEK FOURTEEN**

Tuesday  Apr. 19 **ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS:** DRAFT OF FINAL PAPERS

Thursday Apr. 21  **In-Class:** Continue work on Final Papers

**WEEK FIFTEEN**

Tuesday  Apr. 26  Drafts of Final Papers returned; Discuss common issues

Thursday Apr. 28  Present (in essence and abbreviated) ½ Final Papers as “Mock Conference”-approx. 8-10 minute summary of core concepts

**WEEK SIXTEEN**

Tuesday  May 3  Present second ½ of Final Papers;

Thursday May 6  Wrap-Up

Final Papers are due on the day of the regularly scheduled exam for this course (Thursday, May 12th)