Required Texts:
Take Me Out by Richard Greenberg, ISBN: 0571211186
Rhinocerous by Eugène Ionesco, ISBN: 0141184299
Pillowman by Martin McDonagh, ISBN: 0822221004
For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf by Ntozake Shange, ISBN: 1439186812
Reasons to be Pretty by Neil LaBute, ISBN: 0822223945

Recommended Texts:
The most current edition of The Dramatists’ Sourcebook is also recommended.

Seeing Plays
While this course will require seeing the Department of Theater plays of the semester, I recommend seeing as many performances as possible, and I will alert you to opportunities in Speech Communication and other local venues. Playwriting is not merely about words, but also sights, sounds, and actions. Seeing as much varied theater as possible is absolutely crucial to being a good playwright.

Content Introduction:
This course is designed to develop your playwriting skills. If you have experience writing plays, it will enhance your skills; if you’ve never written a play before, it will guide you through the process. I will spend some of each class sharing my remarks on particular aspects of playwriting, but the rest of the class will be taken up by in-class writing exercises, readings of scenes, and discussions. While I do not expect you to be experts, I expect each of you to contribute your questions and insights. This seminar will focus on allowing you to understand and question the fundamentals of playwriting, and to understand how these theories are relevant to your own writing. It is through writing and discussion that you will come to these understandings, thus your participation is expected and required.

As an author, unless specifically addressed, you should not join in the critique of your own writing assignments. Instead, you should pretend you are a famous playwright who’s away celebrating your recent success, but somehow also able to hear these candid reactions to your work. That way you can just listen to the comments and take them in (even if you disagree) without attempting to defend your work. After all, a playwright cannot follow an audience out of a theatre explaining the production. Take notes and you will be given the opportunity to ask questions (not defend your work) after the discussion.

Course Description:
This course continues discussion of the basic techniques of structure and dialogue in playwriting. Written exercises are submitted and discussed to identify dramatic events. Students will self-produce several short plays in collaborative evenings. Students develop a full-length play.
**Goals and Objectives:**
By the end of the course students will have completed writing exercises that will give them a practical knowledge of six fundamental elements of playwriting: conflict, character, story/plot, the six points of basic structure, and the three kids of structure.

Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze a text according to these elements, through in class critique of other students’ writing exercises, and through writing an original full-length play.

Throughout the course, class members will do cold readings of each other’s writing assignments; this will give students a familiarity with hearing their words spoken outloud. When called upon to act, students will be able to recognize from an actor’s point of view what makes dramatic dialogue.

**DoT Goals:**
**Goal #1** - Demonstrate an understanding of the individual artist’s place in the role of theater as a collaborative art.
**Goal #2** - Understand and appreciate the process of production.
**Goal #3** - Demonstrate the relationship of theater to world history, societies and cultures.
**Goal #4** - Master skills, vocabulary and concepts necessary in today’s theater to understand and practice the art of theater.

**Attendance:**
Attendance and punctuality in this class are crucial because it depends on its participants in a workshop setting. Because of this, more than one absence will affect your grade, and more than three may result in failure. Save your absence for emergencies. The second absence lowers your final grade one letter. The third absence lowers your grade another letter. The fourth absence means you may fail the course.

**Late Assignments:**
Because workshopping in class is a necessary component of the course, no late assignments will be accepted.

**Professionalism:**
Because this is a writing workshop, it is imperative that you bring energy to the classroom. Your colleagues will depend on your critiques to help them grow as writers, just as you will depend on them. Likewise, writing is a difficult task and one naturally feels attached to one’s writing. Therefore, you must be courteous and respectful in your critiques. You may NEVER let your critique of a play become a critique of the author.

**Assignments:**
ALL DIALOGUE ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE FORMATTED IN STANDARD PLAY FORMAT. (IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW IN THE DRAMATISTS SOURCEBOOK).

**Weekly Writing assignments**
Each student will be responsible for weekly pieces of dialogue/short plays as well as pages of an original full-length play.

**Periodic Production assignments**
Each student will be responsible for regularly self-producing his/her short plays in collaborative evenings.
Presentation on a play read for class
Each student will be responsible for presenting his/her structural analysis of one of the plays we read for class.

Midterm:
Instead of a midterm, in week 11 each student will turn in a first draft of an original full-length play. Individual conferences concerning your scenarios or outlines will follow.

Final:
A final draft of your original full-length play is due on the last day of class as well as a self-evaluation of your participation in class.

Grading Policy and Evaluation Procedures:

GRADE BREAKDOWN

A is demonstrating significant creativity and intelligence
B is fulfilling all requirements with some original thought
C is average and fulfilling all requirements
D is less than satisfactory work that nearly fulfills the requirements
F fails to meet the minimum requirements.

In-Class Discussions
• Do you come to class on-time and prepared?
• Do you contribute intelligently, diplomatically and with genuine care to your peers’ work?
• Do you give encouragement and support?
• Do you give constructive criticism rather than destructive criticism?
Possible total of 20 points.

New Play Pages/Short Plays
5 points each
• Do they demonstrate the element of playwriting discussed that week?
• Are they the appropriate number of pages, neither too short NOR too long?
Possible total of 30 points

Presentation of Play’s Structure in Class
• Does your presentation reflect the structure of the play read for class?
• Does the presentation utilize specific evidence from the text, down to page numbers?
Possible total of 10 points

Original Full-Length Play: First Draft
• Does it adequately explain how the story would function onstage?
• Does it demonstrate creative application of techniques discussed in class?
• Does it demonstrate intelligence, originality, and artistry?
• Is it limited to actions?
Possible total of 20 points.

Original Full-Length Play: Final Draft
• Does it demonstrate creative application of techniques discussed in class?
• Does it demonstrate intelligence, originality, and artistry?
• Does it demonstrate understanding of a script for the stage?
• Is it rewritten based on comments from our individual conferences?

Possible total of 20 points.

The possible class total is 100 points. Grades will be calculated on a straight percentage, with 90-100% being an A, 80-89% being a B, 70-79% being a C, 60-69% being a D, and anything lower receiving a failing grade.

Course Schedule:
(THIS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON DEPARTMENT AND STUDENT SCHEDULES)

Reading and Assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below. There are no “make-ups” for IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES.

WEEK ONE:
Day 1: 1/20
Introductions
   Explain syllabus; assign reading/presentation dates.

Day 2: 1/22
  *Rhinocerous* by Eugène Ionesco
  Presented by _______________________________

Homework:
Write/produce Big Muddy Shorts

WEEK TWO:
Big Muddy Shorts, Thursday 1/29; you must produce yours.

Day 3: 1/27
Group 1) Read pages by _____________________________

Day 4: 1/29
  *Colored Museum* by George Wolfe
  Presented by _______________________________

Homework:
5-10 pages from full-length play are due via e-mail to Jacob next week

WEEK THREE:
Day 5: 2/3
Discuss Big Muddy Shorts

Day 6: 2/5
Group 2) Read pages by _____________________________

Homework:
5-10 pages from full-length play are due via e-mail to Jacob next week
Write/produce Big Muddy Shorts

WEEK FOUR:
Big Muddy Shorts, Thursday 2/12; you must produce yours.
Day 7: 2/10
Group 3) Read pages by _____________________________

Day 8: 2/12
??????

Homework:
5-10 pages from full-length play are due via e-mail to Jacob next week

WEEK FIVE:

Day 9: 2/17
Discuss Big Muddy Shorts.

Day 10: 2/19
Group 1) Read pages by_____________________________

Homework:
5-10 pages from full-length play are due via e-mail to Jacob next week

WEEK SIX:

Day 11: 2/24
Group 2) Read pages by_____________________________

Day 12: 2/26
Topdog/Underdog by Suzan Lori-Parks
Presented by_______________________

Homework:
5-10 pages from full-length play are due via e-mail to Jacob next week

WEEK SEVEN:
BIG MUDDY SHORTS 3/5?

Day 13: 3/3
Group 3) Read pages by_____________________________

Day 14: 3/5
For Colored Girls... by Ntozake Shange
Presented by_______________________

Homework:
Short play
5-10 pages from full-length play are due via e-mail to Jacob after Spring Break

WEEK EIGHT: SPRING BREAK

WEEK NINE:
Day 15: 3/17
Read/Discuss short plays

Day 16: 3/19 No Class -- MATC

Homework:
5-10 pages from full-length play are due via e-mail to Jacob next week

Week Ten:
Day 19: 3/24
Group 1) Read pages by_______________________

Day 20: 3/26
Group 2) Read pages by__________________________

Homework:
Finish rough draft of full-length play
Go to New Play Festival, take part in Q&A after readings

Week Eleven:
Day 21: 3/31
Draft of Full-Lengths Due in class (e-mail pdf or word file to Jacob is preferred method)
Discuss Festival

Day 22: 4/2
Or, by Liz Duffy Adams
Presented by__________________________

Homework:
Set up appointments with Jacob to discuss full-length scripts
Write Big Muddy Short

Week Twelve:
Big Muddy Shorts 4/9; you must produce yours

Day 23: 4/7
Take Me Out by Richard Greenberg
Presented by__________________________

Day 24: 4/9
Ruined by Lynn Nottage
Presented by__________________________

Homework:
Attend production and both staged readings of New Plays Festival / Take Part in Post-Show Discussions

Week Thirteen:
Day 25: 4/14
Discuss Big Muddy Shorts
Day 26: 4/16
   Play 1) Read draft by_____________________________

**Homework:**
   Rewrite full-length

**WEEK FOURTEEN:**

Day 27: 4/21
   Play 2) Read draft by_____________________________

Day 28: 4/23
   Play 3) Read draft by_____________________________

**Homework:**
   Rewrite full-length

**WEEK FIFTEEN:**

Day 29: 4/28
   Play 4) Read draft by_____________________________

Day 30: 4/30
   Play 5) Read draft by_____________________________

**Homework:**
   Write/Produce Big Muddy Shorts
   Rewrite Full-length play

**WEEK SIXTEEN: WRAP UP**
Big Muddy Shorts Monday 5/4; you must produce yours.

Day 31: 5/5
   Discuss Big Muddy Shorts

Day 32: 5/7: Wrap Up

**FINALS WEEK:**
Draft of your play is due via email during our finals period.