NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
The City University of New York
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT

AFR 1321: BLACK THEATER- 3 credits
CityTech Flexible Core: Creative Expression

Semester: FALL 2016
Instructor: Prof. Jeannine Foster-McKelvia
Office: A634
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 2:00pm-2:30pm
Phone: (718)260-5205 Email: JFoster-McKelvia@citytech.cuny.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This introductory course on African American dramatic literature explores the complex ways in which the black experience is constructed and presented by playwrights. In order to examine who or what informs contemporary Black playwrights, this course is divided into three parts. First, it will include a historical overview of early Black theatre beyond and within the United States. Second, it will analyze how contemporary playwrights have been influenced by Lorraine Hansberry, Leroi Jones, and Ntozake Shange. Third, it will consider the extent to which contemporary Black playwrights use theatre and performance to examine the social and political realities of Africana people. During the semester, students may have an opportunity to experience a theatrical production in New York City.

PREREQUISITES: CUNY proficiency in reading and writing or proficiency in reading and concurrent registration in ENG 092W

REQUIRED TEXT: A specially designed University Reader Black Theater Course Packet is required for this course. A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry, Dutchman by Leroi Jones, AKA Amiri Baraka, Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage and The Piano Lesson by August Wilson. Attendance to a local Black theatre production, details to be provided. All other required readings can be accessed through the Black Drama Database and through other online tools. Students will be unable to pass this course without the materials from the course packet and other online reading tools. The University Reader Black Theater Course Packet is ONLY available in the College’s Bookstore.
RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Anderson, Lisa M. *Black Feminism in Contemporary Drama.*


Hamalian, Leo and James V. Hatch, eds. *The Roots of African American Drama.*


Molette, Carlton W. and Barbara J. *Black Theatre: Premise and Presentation.*

Nottage, Lynn. *Crumbs from the Table of Joy and Other Plays.*

Shannon, Sandra and Dana Williams, eds. *August Wilson and the Black Aesthetics.*

## COURSE CONTENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use play texts, recordings, essays, and live performances to dissect the ways in which black playwrights have contributed to theatre and drama;</td>
<td>In-class and Blackboard discussions, papers, quizzes, oral presentations, individual and group activities, and exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use black plays to critique race, gender, class, and sexuality;</td>
<td>In-class and Blackboard discussions, papers, quizzes, oral presentations, individual and group activities, and exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explore the ways in which sociopolitical issues and events, including but not limited to, The Great Migration, Civil Rights Movement, Black Power Movement, Feminist Movements, and Hip-Hop culture have shaped black theatre and drama; and</td>
<td>In-class and Blackboard discussions, papers, quizzes, oral presentations, individual and group activities, and exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze how Africana culture(s) have influenced and shaped black theatre in America.</td>
<td>In-class and Blackboard discussions, papers, quizzes, oral presentations, individual and group activities, and exams</td>
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## General Education Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop critical thinking and writing skills by examining and critiquing key elements in black theatre;</td>
<td>Quizzes, in-class and Blackboard discussions, papers and exams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop oral communications skills;</td>
<td>Group activities and oral presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop an appreciation for and understanding of the critical characteristics of theatre and drama and the ways in which people of African descent have contributed to the development of theatre and drama over time.</td>
<td>In-class and Blackboard discussions, papers, quizzes, oral presentations, individual and group activities, and exams</td>
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GRADING PROCEDURE & ASSIGNMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes, In-Class Exercises &amp; Response Papers</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Various methods will be used to evaluate students' work throughout the semester. Attendance will be taken each day of class. Each student is expected to read the required texts on time and to make thoughtful contributions to the class discussions. Students are also required to take notes during class. The discussions, quizzes, in-class exercises, presentation and examinations are all designed to help students strengthen writing and critical thinking skills. Further details will be provided for all assignments. If a student misses the midterm exam, final exam, or presentation without clearing his/her absence he/she will receive a zero.

**********LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**********

CLASS CONDUCT:

- Students must arrive on time, in order to fully participate and receive full credit for attending the class session. If lateness is unavoidable, the student is welcome to join the class, but he/she is expected not to disrupt the session already in progress. Points will be deducted from the final average, if students are consistently late and absent.
- Students must turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before class begins. In addition, texting in class is absolutely prohibited. Points will be deducted from the final average, if students consistently text in class, allow cell phones to ring in class and/or consistently leave class to answer calls.
- No one is allowed to wear headphones in class.
- No one is allowed to eat in class.
- Please note plagiarism is the act of taking someone else’s words and passing them off as your own. IT IS A FORM OF CHEATING! IT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED! (View CityTech’s Academic Integrity Policy Manual: http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/aboutus/docs/policies/CT_PolicyManual11_12.pdf)
WEEK 1

- **Monday, August 29, 2016**
  Topic: Introduction to Black Theatre
  Assignment: Read “Criteria of Negro Art” by W. E. B. DuBois (See Handout)
  Carlton W. and Barbara J. Molette, *Black Theatre: Premise and Presentation*
  (Course Packet)

- **Wednesday, August 31, 2016**
  Discussion Topic: Why Black Theatre: “Criteria of Negro Art”
  The beginnings (Abydos Passion Play)
  Assignment: Read *William Branch, editor. Black Thunder: An Anthology of Contemporary American Drama* (Course Packet)
  *Genevieve Fabre, Drumbeats Masks and Metaphor: Contemporary Afro-American Theatre* (Course Packet)

WEEK 2

- **Monday, September 5, 2016**
  "NO CLASS" LABOR DAY

- **Wednesday, September 7, 2016**
  Discussion Topic: Early Black Theatre (African Grove Theatre)
  View and Discuss documentary film Black Theatre: The Making of a Movement
  Assignment: Read “The Sighted Eyes and Feeling Heart of Lorraine Hansberry,” by Margaret Wilkerson (Course Packet)
  *A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry Act I*

WEEK 3

- **Monday, September 12, 2016**
  Discussion: Lorraine Hansberry and *A Raisin in the Sun* ACT I
  Assignment: Read *A Raisin in the Sun* Act II and Act III

- **Wednesday, September 14, 2016**
  Discussion Topic: *A Raisin in the Sun* Act II and Act III
  In class assignment: read *Jet Magazine*, March 26, 1959 (Course Packet)
WEEK 4

- Monday, September 19, 2016
  Discussion Topic: continue *A Raisin in the Sun*
  View and discuss film: *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961)

- Wednesday, September 21, 2016
  View and discuss film: *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961) complete viewing
  Download the article from the website below and print the article to bring to class:

WEEK 5

- Monday, September 26, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Amira Baraka, The Black Arts Movement
  View and discuss film: excerpts from I'll Make me a World
  Assignment: * Read the entire one act play *Dutchman* by Leroi Jones AKA Amiri Baraka

- Wednesday, September 28, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Dutchman
  View and discuss film: *Dutchman* (1967)
  Assignment: TBA

WEEK 6

- Monday, October 3, 2016 ******NO CLASS******

- Wednesday, October 5, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Complete Dutchman
  Assignment: Read *Lisa M. Anderson, Black Feminism in Contemporary Drama* (Course Packet)
  * Black Female Playwrights by Kathy Perkins, Introduction (See Handout)
  *Excerpt of *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf* by Ntozake Shange (Black Drama Database) See handout for specific instructions
Thursday, October 6, 2016    ^^^^^CLASSES FOLLOW MONDAY SCHEDULE^^^^^  
Discussion Topic: Black Female playwrights, Ntozake Shange, and reshaping form and Content, for colored girls.......  
Assignment: Read Excerpt from for black boys who considered homicide when the streets were too much by Keith Antar Mason (Course Packet) and handout

WEEK 7

- Monday, October 10, 2016 *******NO CLASS******* COLUMBUS DAY

- Wednesday, October 12, 2016 *******NO CLASS******

WEEK 8

- Monday, October 17, 2016  
  Discussion Topic: Discuss and compare for colored girls..... and for black boys...  
  Assignment: History Research Assignment #1(see handout for details)  
  **Due Wednesday, October 26

- Wednesday, October 19, 2016  
  Discussion Topic: Complete for colored girls.... & for black boys  
  Review for Mid-Term  
  Assignment: Study for Mid-Term

WEEK 9

Monday, October 24, 2016  
****Mid-Term Test***  
###Make up test WILL NOT be given###  
Assignment: Read *Excerpt of Fires in the Mirror by Anna Deavere Smith (Course Packet)

- Wednesday, October 26, 2016  
  Discussion Topic: Documentary Style Theatre, History Research Assignment #1  
  Anna Deavere Smith and Fires in the Mirror  
  View and discuss excerpt of the film Fires in the Mirror  
  Assignment: History research Assignment #2 (see handout for Details)  
  ***Due Wednesday, November 2, 2016
WEEK 10

- Monday, October 31, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Complete Fires in the Mirror
  Assignment: Read Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage ACT I

- Wednesday, November 2, 2016
  Discussion Topic: History as setting in Contemporary Black Theatre,
  Discuss History research Assignment #2, Intimate Apparel Act I
  Assignment: Read Intimate Apparel Act II

WEEK 11

- Monday, November 7, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Intimate Apparel ACT II
  Assignment: TBD and Details for final project Due December 5

- Wednesday, November 9, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Complete Intimate Apparel
  Download and Print this article at: [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/callaloo/v020/20.3wilson02.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/callaloo/v020/20.3wilson02.html)
  *Dana A. Williams and Sandra Shannon, editors. August Wilson and Black Aesthetics (Course Packet)

WEEK 12

- Monday, November 14, 2016
  Discussion Topic: August Wilson’s Aesthetic
  View and discuss film The Ground on Which I Stand
  Assignment: The Piano Lesson By August Wilson Act I

- Wednesday, November 16, 2016
  Discussion Topic: The Piano Lesson ACT I
  Assignment: Read The Piano Lesson Act II Scenes 1,2 & 3
WEEK 13

- Monday, November 21, 2016
  Discussion Topic: The Piano Lesson ACT II Scenes 1, 2 & 3
  Assignment: The Piano Lesson Act II Scenes 4 & 5

- Wednesday, November 23, 2016
  Discussion Topic: The Piano Lesson ACT II Scenes 4 & 5
  View and discuss excerpts from the film The Piano Lesson (1995)
  Assignment: TBA

WEEK 14

- Monday, November 28, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Complete The Piano Lesson
  Assignment: Read Excerpt of The Colored Museum by George C. Wolfe (See Handout)

- Wednesday, November 30, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Scrutinizing the Tradition of Stereotypes and Black character Stereotypes, The Colored Museum
  Assignment: TBA

WEEK 15

- Monday, December 5, 2016
  Discussion Topic: Complete discussion on The Colored Museum
  Assignment: Read Excerpt of Deep Azure by Chadwick Boseman (Course Packet)

- Wednesday, December 7, 2016
  Discussion Topic: And There Was the Word: Voices in Hip Hop Theatre
  Assignment: *****FINAL PROJECT DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016******
  ########_LATE PROJECTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED_########
WEEK 16

- Monday, December 12, 2016
  Presentation of FINAL PROJECTS  ### LATE PROJECTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED####
  *****REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM****

- Wednesday, December 14, 2016
  FINAL EXAMINATION  ****MAKE-UP TEST WILL NOT BE GIVEN****