

**Women In 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Century American Theatre**  
**THDA 762**  
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**Office Hours: T, R 8-9am; R 2-3**  
**or by appointment**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Through selected readings of female playwrights, students will engage in discussions about the significant contributions of American women starting with the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. We will focus on the progress of women in theatre and the evolution of female characters throughout the century. We will also examine the roles of women and how feminism is portrayed in works as women began to enjoy more freedoms throughout the twentieth century. Students will also research the work of one influential female theatre artist / women’s theatre group and write an extensive research paper.

<b>COURSE GRADING:</b>		<b>GRADING SCALE:</b>	
Attendance / Participation:	20 / 20	A	94-100%
Reflective Journal:	30 / 30	A-	92-93%
Research Paper:	40 / 40	B+	90-91%
Group Project:	30 / 30	B	84-89%
Female Production Reaction:	15 / 15	B-	82-83%
Midterm Essay Test:	45 / 45	C+	80-81%
Final Exam Essay Test:	45 / 45	C	74-79%
		C-	72-73%
		D+	70-71%
		D	64-69%
		D-	62-63%

**Attendance:**

Each student will be allowed a maximum of 2 absences for the semester. You may use these 2 absences for any reason (illness, another engagement, you don’t want to get out of bed that day...). Unless for pre-approved reasons, any additional absences will result in a lowered grade. NOTE: two tardies will equal one absence. (1/3 grade reduction per absence).

**Texts: (\* = copy provided by professor)**

*Plays by American Women, 1903-1930*, Edited by Judith Barlow  
*Plays by American Women, 1930-1960*, Edited by Judith Barlow  
 \**“Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters,”* Stein *Mud*, Fornes  
*The Children’s Hour*, Hellman *“Most Massive Woman Wins,”* George  
*Venus*, Parks *The Drinking Gourd*, Hansberry  
*How I Learned to Drive*, Vogel *My Left Breast*, Miller  
*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, When The Rainbow Is Enuf*, Shange  
*‘Night Mother*, Norman  
 \**The Waiting Room*, Loomer

<b>Student Resources:</b>	
Center for Academic Resources	Connors Writing Center
<a href="http://www.cfar.unh.edu">www.cfar.unh.edu</a> ; 862-3698	<a href="http://www.unh.edu/writing">www.unh.edu/writing</a> ; 862-3272

\*\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THE UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS ZERO TOLERANCE REGARDING STUDENTS WHO BREAK THE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY. The full policy description can be accessed on p. 36 of the Student Rights, Rules and Responsibilities Handbook. \*\*\*\*

**“If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course, please register with the Access Office in the Memorial Union Building, Room 118 (862.2607) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. Students who already registered with the Access Office and wish to receive accommodations in this course are strongly encouraged to share their Accommodation Letter with me in a timely manner.”**

## ALL SYLLABUS CONTENTS / GUIDELINES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

### ASSIGNMENTS

**For all work, students are held to the UNH Academic Honesty policy. Use your own words; don't copy from books, articles, internet sites, audio or video recordings without proper citation.**

**Reflective Journal (DUE Classes 3/8 & 4/26):** Each student should keep a reflective journal detailing thoughts on each assigned play reading. In addition, any assigned article readings students are given should have a critical response entry in the reflective journal. The journal should be more than a summary of what was discussed. It should be the student's own assessment of the validity of the material. Challenge. Discriminate. Don't accept everything as true. Make your own thoughts known, backed with reasons. Do you agree with the way women are portrayed in each reading?

Sections for your journal:

- Personal Reaction to each individual play reading (how you felt, how women are represented in characters, the progression of the female role throughout the century)
- Reactions to guest artists: Dr. Dorothy Holland; Dr. Noreen Barnes
- Reaction to all article supplements (including readings from *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*)

**Research Paper (DUE Class 3/22):** Each student is expected to choose either a prominent female theatre artist or a women's theatre group and write a detailed research paper. This should be a 7-10 page analysis of this person / group's work. What is their philosophy? How is that represented in the work? What is the significance this person / group has had for women's theatre and/or feminism? For theatre in general? What is this person's / group's belief about women's roles in theatre? Use correct MLA citations / bibliography. (see list of suggested topics)

#### **Group Projects (DUE Class 5/3):**

In groups of 2 or 3, students will choose one of the following assignments:

1. Choose five plays from those read this semester as would be appropriate for a chosen season for a theatre specializing in female drama. Justify their grouping by writing a rationale for why these five plays were chosen (how / why do they fit together?)
2. Write a mission statement for a new female theatre. Write a rationale for why this particular mission statement / philosophy is appropriate for your theatre.
3. Create a marketing plan for getting people into a theatre that specializes in female theatre. Write a rationale for why this particular marketing plan will be the best.
4. Choosing one of the plays read in class, collect / organize dramaturgical information for the possible purpose of including this information in an educational guide that would accompany this production.

#### **Female Production Reaction Paper (DUE 4/21):**

Attend a play written by a female (either the Vagina Monologues performed on campus or some other area production.) In your reaction discuss:

1. The representation of gender in the play. (typical? Reversed roles?)
2. Any particular political statements / agendas being made about gender.
3. How the female voice of the author colors the message.
4. Whether males are put off or welcomed by the message / tone. Why?

#### **Guest Artist Special Presentation (date & time TBD):**

Attend Dr. Holland's outside class presentation for extra credit.

**Midterm & Final Exams (DUE Class 3/3 & Class 5/12):** The two exams will be take home essay tests. Students are expected to use citations and research from their studies in class, both from articles, play readings, and independent research.

<b>COURSE SCHEDULE</b>	
T 1/18	INTRO / SYLLABUS Discussion: Overview of women in American theatre / drama <b>ASST: RESEARCH PAPER (due 3/22)</b>
R 1/20	The Federal Theatre Project Overview Hallie Flanagan <b>ASST: Can You Hear the Voices?</b>
T 1/25	Discussion: Can You Hear the Voices? Hallie Flanagan <b>ASST: A Man's World</b>
R 1/27	Discussion: A Man's World, Rachel Crothers
T 2/1	Discussion: The Depression – its presence in these female works <b>ASST: The Children's Hour</b>
R 2/3	Discussion: The Children's Hour, Lillian Hellman
T 2/8	<b>Movie: The Children's Hour</b>
R 2/10	<b>Movie: The Children's Hour</b>
T 2/15	Discussion: Gender Roles as they have been exhibited in readings <b>ASST: Trifles / Plumes</b>
R 2/17	Discussion: Trifles / Plumes <b>ASST: MIDTERM EXAM (due 3/3)</b>
T 2/22	<b>Group Project Work (OUTSIDE CLASS WORK)</b> <b>ASST: Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters</b>
R 2/24	Discussion: Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters, Gertrude Stein <b>ASST: The Women</b>
T 3/1	Discussion: The Women, Claire Boothe <b>ASST: Reflective Journal check (due 3/8)</b>
R 3/3	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b> <b>ASST: The Drinking Gourd</b>
T 3/8	<b>Dr. Dorothy Holland, University of Richmond – Guest Speaker</b>
R 3/10	<b>Dr. Noreen Barnes, Virginia Commonwealth University – Guest Speaker</b>
T 3/22	<b>DUE: REFLECTIVE JOURNAL CHECK</b> Discussion: Les Blanc, Lorraine Hansberry <b>ASST: For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / when the Rainbow Is Enuf</b>
R 3/24	<b>DUE: RESEARCH PAPER</b> Discussion: For Colored Girls..., Ntozake Shange
T 3/29	<b>Group Project Work</b> <b>ASST: Mud</b>
R 3/31	Discussion: Mud, Maria Irene Fornes <b>ASST: My Left Breast</b>

T 4/5	Discussion: My Left Breast, Miller <b>ASST: How I Learned to Drive</b>
R 4/7	Discussion: How I Learned to Drive, Paula Vogel <b>ASST: 'Night Mother; Reviews</b>
T 4/12	Discussion: 'Night Mother controversy <b>ASST: The Waiting Room</b>
R 4/14	Discussion: The Waiting Room. Lisa Loomer <b>ASST: Group Project Work</b>
T 4/19	Group Project Work <b>ASST: The Most Massive Woman Wins</b> <b>ASST: Female Production Reaction Paper</b>
R 4/21	<b>DUE: FEMALE PRODUCTION REACTION PAPER</b> Discussion: The Most Massive Woman Wins, Madeleine George <b>ASST: Reflective Journal</b>
T 4/26	<b>DUE: Reflective Journal</b> <b>Group Project Work / Course Evaluations</b>
R 4/28	Female Gender Roles as applied in the readings <b>ASST: FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>
T 5/3	<b>DUE: FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>
R 5/5	<b>DUE: FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>
5/12	1-3 PM, FINAL EXAM ESSAY TESTS DUE

**SUGGESTED RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS:**

Cherrie Moraga	Shirley Graham (DeBois)
Cheryl West	Liza Pettigren
Ntozake Shange	Alice Childress
Wendy Kesselman	Jane Bowles
Julie Jensen	Margaret Ellen Clifford
Paula Vogel	Anna Cora Mowatt
Susan Yankowitz	Jane Wagner
Joan Holden	Hallie Flannigan
Adrienne Kennedy	Susan Glaspell
Emily Mann	Eve Ensler
Anna Deavere Smith	Julie Taymor
Naomi Wallace	Charlotte Cushman
Suzan-Lori Parks	Zora Neil Hurston
Pearl Cleage	Wendy Wasserstein
Heather MacDonald	Holly Hughes
Beth Henley	Suzan Zeder
Joan Lipkin	Gertrude Stein
Joan Schenkar	Anne Bogart
Wendy Wasserstein	Omaha Magic Theatre
Marlene Meyer	Brava!
Constance Congdon	The Women's Project
Tina Howe	Spiderwoman
Rebecca Gilman	Split Britches
Diana Son	The Five Lesbian Brothers
Wakako Yamauchi	Dorothy Fields
Velina Houston	Carolyn Leigh
Sarah Dreher	Liz Swaddos
Rebecca Ranson	Gretchen Cryer