

Spring 2010

**DRAMATURGY**  
**TD 385D, Unique #25955**  
**TD 351T, Unique #25715**

**Paul Bonin-Rodriguez**

**T/Th 2-3:15 PM; Winship 1.100 (Payne Lobby)**

**Office B 104 C Winship, 232-5310**

**Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-2. And by appointment**

**pbonrod@mail.utexas.edu**

**Course Description:** This class examines the term dramaturgy multiple theoretical, historical, social, and practical perspectives and applies those skills to constructing dramaturgy for the theatre, as well as public culture. Our course follows a rather dramatic arc in seven steps.

1. We begin with a focus on practice, examining dramaturgy in the Department of Theatre and Dance and beyond, and apply our own creative skills to the envisioning of an upcoming UT TD production, Mac Wellman's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*.
2. We delve deeper into our definition and understanding of the term as we examine the potentials and pitfalls experienced by new play dramaturgs and dramatists.
3. We return to practice and research and challenge ourselves to create a dramaturgical concept for a Shakespearean production, *Twelfth Night*.
4. We explore the history of dramaturgy and its practice in Europe and the United States.
5. We stop to consider how dramaturgy can help us understand public culture and manipulate public response.
6. We put our skills to use to make a beloved chestnut of a production, *The Fantasticks*, fresh once again, especially for its imminent audience, the alumni and donors of the Dept. of Theatre and Dance in the Fall of 2010.
7. Finally, we bone up on our copyright law and consider a case that challenged, or some say asserted, the power of a dramaturg, Thomson vs. Larson (aka, "The Rent Case").

By the end of the course you should have a critical understanding of the history of dramaturgy, and a sense of its importance today, not only as a theatrical profession, but method for critiquing and participating in public culture.

**Texts:** The first four texts can be purchased at the University Co-Op within 2 weeks of the start of class. Please buy them there – the Co-Op pays for our New Works Festival and provides fellowships to students. All these texts can be found on reserve in the Fine Arts Library (FAL).

- Cathy Turner and Synne K. Behrndt. ***Dramaturgy and Performance***. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008. \$25-\$30.00. *Please order online from your favorite bookstore. We will read the book during Spring Break, but you should order the book soon. This book is also on reserve in the Fine Arts Library (FAL).*
- Andrew James Hartley. ***The Shakespearean Dramaturg: a Theoretical and Practical Guide***. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. \$25-\$30.
- William Shakespeare, ***Twelfth Night***.
- Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt. ***The Fantasticks***.
- Edmond Rostand, ***The Romantics***. (This play is on reserve at the FAL)
- Selections from Mary Luckhurst. ***Dramaturgy: a Revolution in Theatre***. New York: Cambridge UP, 2006. *This book can be checked out online in the UT Libraries or on reserve in the FAL.*
- *All articles and plays not otherwise listed can be found on the class Blackboard.*
- *Some plays/stories/videos can be seen online; others will be on reserve in the FAL*

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## Course Outline:

### Week One: Introductions

#### **Tues., Jan. 19: Introduction**

Introduction; discuss syllabus, course goals and expectations, assignments, a contract for working together.

#### **Thurs., Jan 21: (27 pp) Dance Dramaturgy**

##### **Special Guest Dramaturg, Dr. Clare Croft**

- Clare Croft. "A Mutually Satisfying Pas de Deux: Feminist Dramaturgy and Dance in the Undergraduate Dance Curriculum." *Theatre Topics* 19.2 (2009): 181-191.
- Tamsen Wolff. "Women's Work: Gender and Dramaturgy." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (2003): 103-104.
- Lynn M. Thomson. "Teaching and Rehearsing Collaboration." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (2003): 117-128.

### Week Two: Dance Dramaturgy, Collaboration, and Starting a Project

#### **Tues., Jan. 26: Headlong Dance and Collaboration**

##### **Special Guest Artists: Andrew Simonet, Amy Smith, and David Brick of Headlong Dance, Philadelphia, PA**

- <http://www.vimeo.com/videos/search:headlong%20dance%20theater>  
(see all excerpt videos: *Cell*, *Thrash*, *Hotel Pool*, and *Headlong Dance First Fridays*)
- Read: <http://www.danceumbrella.com/Headlong.htm>
- Read: <http://www.danceumbrella.com/events.htm>

##### *MORE*

Headlong Dance Co.

Rollins Studio at the Long Center

January 29 at 8 PM

January 30 at 3 PM

For tix: <http://www.danceumbrella.com/events.htm>

#### **Thurs., Jan. 28: (80+ pp) Cohesiveness and Play in the Open Script: an Introduction to *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field***

##### **Facilitator: M'bewe Escobar, Production Dramaturg for *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field***

- Read "The Difficulty of Crossing a Field," by Ambrose Bierce
- <http://www.ambrosebierce.org/difficulty.htm>
- Read *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, by Mac Wellman.
- Research Mac Wellman and the play on your own
- In-class, listen to music selections and discuss the potential looks of the production.
- (\*Paul in San Francisco at Creative Communities Meeting)

### Week Three: The Difficulty of Crossing a Field

#### **Tues., Feb. 2: (27pp) Starting the Work**

##### **Guest Luke Leonard, Director for *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field***

- Bonnie Marranca. "The Wooster Group: A Dictionary of Ideas." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 25.2 (2003): 1-18.
- Valy Sidibe and R. H. Mitsch. "Bin Kadi-So and Dramatic Innovation." *Research in African Literatures* 30.4 (1999): 127-134.
- Possible additional reading, TBA

**Thurs., Feb. 4: (17+ pp) The Actor Packet**

**Special Guest, Eleanor Owicki, Dramaturg for *The Idiot, Trojan Women, and The Threepenny Opera* (forthcoming)**

- “Actor Packet for *The Idiot*,” compiled by Nora Davidson, Lindsey Mantoan, and Eleanor Owicki, Spring 2009. <http://blogs.utexas.edu/utppp/>
- Kirk Lynn and Shawn Sides. "Collective Dramaturgy: a Co-consideration of the Dramaturgical Role in Collaborative Creation." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (2003): 111-115.
- Eugenio Barba and Judy Barba. "The Deep Order Called Turbulence: The Three Faces of Dramaturgy." *TDR: The Drama Review* 44.4 (2000): 56-66.

**The UT TD Dramaturgy Colloquium**

Friday, February 5, 3-5 PM

Location TBA

**Week Four: Performing Solutions**

**Tues., Feb. 9: (16 pp) Administrative Concerns and Restraints**

**Special Guest, Denise Martel**

- Lenora Inez Brown. “Is There a Dramaturg in the House?” *American Theatre* 21.9(2004): 74-79.
- Judith D. Rudakoff. "The Four Elements: New Models for a Subversive Dramaturgy." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (2003): 143-152.

**Thurs., Feb. 11: PRESENTATIONS for *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field***

**Special Guest: Luke Leonard**

***White Tie Ball***

Written by Martin Zimmerman

Directed by Steve Moulds

February 12, 13 at 8:00 p.m. February 14 at 2:00 p.m.

**Week Five: Politicizing Dramaturgy 1 – Dueling Manifesto/a**

**Tues., Feb. 16: (13 pp) Dueling Manifestos**

**Special Guest, Martin Zimmerman, playwright, *White Tie Ball***

- McCabe, Terry. "A Good Director Doesn't Need a Dramaturg." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 47.42 (2001): B10-B12 (\*but 8 pages in print)
- Michael X. Zelenak. "Why We Don't Need Directors: A Dramaturgical/Historical Manifesto." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (2003): 105-109.

**Thurs., Feb. 18: (15+ pp) Manifestas and Bigger Battles**

**Special Guest, Carrie Kaplan, Dramaturg for *Lidless* and *410 [GONE]*, among others**

- Carrie Kaplan. “Dramaturgical Manifesta: I’d Rather Shove a Bodkin in My Nawl or Wear a Bona Roba’s Merkin Than Be *That* Kind of Dramaturg.” *Review* 19.1 (2009): 8-9.
- Read Gary Garrison’s Blog, extracriticism (especially “special exercise for a complicated dramaturgical problem”: [http://www.extracriticism.com/extra\\_criticism/by\\_gary\\_garrison/](http://www.extracriticism.com/extra_criticism/by_gary_garrison/)

**Friday, Feb. 19: The Business of Theatre**

**Special Guest: Gary Garrison, Ex. Dir.,**

**The Dramatist Guild Time/Place TBA**

***Blue Point***

Written by Kyle John Schmidt

Directed by Charles Otte

February 19, 20 at 8:00 p.m. February 21 at 2:00 p.m.

**Week Six - Section 4: Dramaturgical Reception for *The Fantasticks***

**Tues., Feb.23:** (100+ pp) **Introduction to *The Fantasticks***

- Read and research *The Fantasticks*
- Read Edmond Rostand's *The Romantics* (on reserve in the FAL)
- Watch *The Fantasticks* on your own (FAL DVD 4061)

**Thurs., Feb. 25: Brainstorming *The Fantasticks* and Getting to Work (Assignments)**

**Special Guests: Wendy Bable, Event Coordinator for *The Fantasticks* TD Event, and Rod Caspers, Dir. For the UT TD production.**

- Read a history of the Curtain Club:  
[http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about\\_us/history/curtain\\_club.cfm](http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about_us/history/curtain_club.cfm)
- Read a brief history of the Dept. of Theatre and Dance  
[http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about\\_us/history/brief\\_history.cfm](http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about_us/history/brief_history.cfm)
- Excerpts from The Amazing Story of the FANTasticks.

**\*\*Section 3 Commentary due by 5 PM.**

***The Tides of Aberdeen***

Written by Erin Phillips

Directed by Courtney Sale

February 26, 27 at 8:00 p.m. February 28 at 2:00 p.m.

**Week Seven - Section 4: *The Fantasticks*!**

**Tues., March 2: Brainstorming session *The Fantasticks*!**

- On your own, watch Eli Kabillio and James A. Ruggier. *Try to Remember: The Fantasticks*. New York: Zeitgeist Films, 2003. (FAL DVD 5240).
- Laurence Maslon. "With a Song in My Heart: Dramaturgy and the American Musical Theater." *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Sourcebook*. Eds. Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl, and Michael Lupu. Orlando: Harcourt Brace College P, 1997. 342-354.
- Selections from Marvin Carlson. *The Haunted Stage* (handout)

**Thurs., March 4: *Fantastick* in-class workshop**

- In-class brainstorm our *Fantastick*'s presentations.
- Additional Readings, TBA (Wolf, "Civilizing and Selling Spectators.")

***Canción del Cuerpo (Song of the Body)***

Artistic Director Lyn C. Wiltshire

Co-Artistic Director Yacov Sharir

March 5 & 6 at 8:00 p.m.

March 7 at 2:00 p.m.

**Week Eight – Section 4: *The Fantasticks***

**Tues., March 9: No official class meeting.**

**Post your "presentations" online by 5 PM – no official class meeting.**

**Thurs., March 11: No official class meeting**

**Post Commentary 4 by 5 PM.**

**March 15-19 – SPRING BREAK**

**Week Nine: *Twelfth Night* \*\*NOTE: Class meets in WIN 1.164 all week.**

**Tues., March 23: PRESENTATIONS**

**Thurs., March 25: (5 pp) Dialoguing the Presentations**

- Bonin-Rodriguez, Paul. "Between One and Many: Dramaturgical Praxis at Jump-Start Performance Co." Theatre Topics 13.1 (2003): 87-91.
- Additional Reading, TBA

**Week Ten: a History of Dramaturgy**

**Tues., March 30 (248 pp) Discussion *Dramaturgy and Performance***

Additional reading: Selections from *Dramaturgy: a Revolution in Theatre*

**Thurs., April 1: (248 pp) Discussion *Dramaturgy and Performance***

Additional reading: Selections from *Dramaturgy: a Revolution in Theatre*

***Our Town***

Written by Thornton Wilder

Directed by Marie Brown

April 2, 3, 9, 10 at 8:00 p.m.

April 7 & 8 at 7:00 p.m. April 3, 10, 11 at 2:00 p.m.

**Week Eleven: Social Dramaturgy and Affective Publics**

**Tues., April 6: (28 pp) *Our Town/ This Country***

**Special Guests Marie Brown, Director, and Shelley Manis, Dramaturg, for *Our Town***

- Conquergood, Lorne Dwight, 1949-. "Lethal Theatre: Performance, Punishment, and the Death Penalty." Theatre Journal 54.3 (2002): 339-367.

**Thurs., April 8: (27) Social and Environmental Theatre**

- Kershaw, Baz. "Ecoactivist Performance: The Environment As Partner in Protest?" TDR: The Drama Review 46.1 (2002): 118-130.
- Schinina, Guglielmo. "Here We Are: Social Theatre and Some Open Questions about Its Developments." TDR: The Drama Review 48.3 (2004): 17-31.

**Week Twelve: Social Dramaturgy/Affective Publics**

**Tues., April 13: (40+ pp) *Sex Panics, among others!***

- Irvine, Janice M. "Transient Feelings: Sex Panics and the Politics of Emotions." GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 14.1 (2007): 1-40.

**Thurs., April 15: PRESENTATIONS**

**Week Thirteen: *The Fantasticks***

**Tues., April 20: (100+ pp) Introduction to *The Fantasticks***

- Read and research *The Fantasticks*
- Read Edmond Rostand's *The Romantics* (on reserve in the FAL)
- Watch *The Fantasticks* on your own (FAL DVD 4061)
- In-class: watch Eli Kabillio and James A. Ruggier. *Try to Remember: The Fantasticks*. New York: Zeitgeist Films, 2003. (FAL DVD 5240)

**Thurs., April 22: [http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about\\_us/history/brief\\_history.cfm](http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about_us/history/brief_history.cfm)Event  
Special Guest: Wendy Bable, Event Coordinator for *The Fantasticks* TD Event**

- Read a history of the Curtain Club:  
[http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about\\_us/history/curtain\\_club.cfm](http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about_us/history/curtain_club.cfm)
- Read a brief history of the Dept. of Theatre and Dance  
[http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about\\_us/history/brief\\_history.cfm](http://www.finearts.utexas.edu/tad/about_us/history/brief_history.cfm)
- Additional reading TBA

***The Difficulty of Crossing a Field***

Libretto by Mac Wellman

Composed by David Lang

Directed by Luke Leonard

Music Directed by Lyn Koenning April 23, 24, 28,  
29, 30 & May 1 at 8:00 p.m.

April 25 & May 1, 2 at 2:00 p.m.

**Week Fourteen: Politicizing Dramaturgy 2**

**Tues, April 27:** (25+ pp) *The Rent Case*

- Rachel Shteir. "The Dramaturg's Progress." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (2003): 165-168.
- Michele Volansky. "Imagining LMDA: Past, Present, and Future." *Theatre Topics* 13.1 (2003), 169-171.
- Read through transcripts of Thomson vs. Larson, along with news coverage:  
[http://www.smithdornanshea.com/RealTime.cgi?case\\_id=thomson\\_v\\_larson&merge=cases|description](http://www.smithdornanshea.com/RealTime.cgi?case_id=thomson_v_larson&merge=cases|description)

**Thurs., April 29: Strategizing a Future – Discussion**

- Read through the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America website: <http://lmda.org>

**Week Fifteen: Wrapping Up**

**Tues. May 4: Final Presentations**

**Thurs., May 6: Class Discussion/CIS**

**Course Requirements and Expectations** (these will be explained fully on separate handouts):

**Course Requirements**

Random Research (7)	35%
Dramaturgy Packets and Presentations (3)	45%
<u>Participation</u>	<u>20%</u>
	100%

1. Random Research (7, at 1 page each). Random Research exercises challenge students to respond to one or research questions. The questions are typical of those that might be posed to a dramaturg from an actor, director, or designer: eg, would a man take off his dinner jacket the presence of a woman in mid-nineteenth century England? Why? When did this change? Responses to the random research questions must be written as page-length essays.
2. Dramaturgy Research Papers/Presentations (3 at 5 pages each). The packets are drawn from exercises faced by dramaturgs. Students may work in teams for the fact sheet and presentations, but turn in separate written papers detailing his/her own work. These 5-page essays will be submitted twice: once as a draft, and again as a final, “dramatist-approved copy.”
3. Participation (see Grading and Attendance)

**Student Working Groups:** I encourage you to form yourselves into groups of at least three students as a teacher training support group. One of the difficulties with teaching is that it’s so often private, and people don’t expect to be able to ask questions of each other as they prepare classes. Forming a support group from the start (preferably with people from outside of your immediate area of expertise), will break the habit of privatizing, and encourage a more collaborative approach to our work. The groups will be used to discuss writing about teaching, to think through course issues, and to circulate syllabi drafts.

**Grading and Attendance:**

1. Grades are averaged according to the percentages above.
2. I expect you to attend each class meeting. You must arrive for class on time (or before), and must not leave early. For each excused or unexcused absence after the first two, your final course grade will drop one letter (that is, if you were getting an A, but you missed three classes, your *course grade* will be a B). Each three late arrivals and/or early departures constitute one absence. As indicated by the course schedule, excused absences may include field-related conferences at which you are presenting. They also include religious holidays (see below) and health reasons. Plan to be in class, and do keep me abreast of any excused absences well in advance.
3. I expect you to read all assignments closely and to participate actively in our discussions, whether about reading materials, the politics and practices of teaching, or our practical exercise sessions. Learning how to offer constructive feedback and learning how to gracefully accept criticism will be an important component of the course.

Quite simply, grades are assessed as follows (note that +/- grades indicating shadings of the criteria offered for full letter grades):

\* \* \*

## **Course Policies and Policies of the University of Texas**

### **University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **Documented Disability Statement**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone).

### **Use of Blackboard in Class**

In this class I use Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to receive assignments. You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

### **Feedback**

During this course I will be asking you to give me feedback on your learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how my teaching strategies are helping or hindering your learning. It's very important for me to know your reaction to what we're doing in class, so I encourage you to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together we can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

### **Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students**

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

### **Religious Holy Days**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)**

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

### **Emergency Evacuation Policy**

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.

If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office

### **Syllabus**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course syllabus.