

Topics in Dramaturgy
T D 385D
Professor Stacy Wolf

In his book, *Mis-directing the Play: An Argument Against Contemporary Theatre*, Terry McCabe argues that “the dramaturg as a distinct position . . . does a disservice to the theatre.” We will begin by taking up McCabe’s challenge and asking, Does theatre need a dramaturg? And if so, why?

We will ask, What is dramaturgy? What can and should a dramaturg do? How can dramaturgy be an integral part of the production process? How can dramaturgy be collaborative and creative, active and productive, supporting and initiating? Is there a dramaturgical sensibility? A philosophy of dramaturgy? A politics of dramaturgy?

The primary goal for the course, then, is to investigate and practice the multiple modes of dramaturgy. We will then explore theories and practices of both production dramaturgy and new play dramaturgy. The class will balance very practical projects with more philosophical and theoretical discussions about dramaturgy’s purpose and usefulness in theatre and performance at various sites.

Readings will include: *Dramaturgy in American Theatre*, A Sourcebook, ed. Lupu, Jonas, Proehl
Between the Lines, ed. Thomson and Rudakoff
Theatre Topics, March 2003, Special Issue on Dramaturgy
Selected plays, both previously performed and new plays

Topics and exercises will include:

- o How to define and describe and advocate for dramaturgy
- o How to adapt and cut texts
- o How to work collaboratively with directors, designers, actors, and outreach coordinators
- o How to work with a playwright or creator of a new play or new performance
- o How to analyze a play closely
- o How to analyze performance
- o How to do useful, evocative, imaginative research on a play and related topics
- o How to use art and music and other modes to inspire and support a production

- o How to create engaging lobby displays, lively program notes, useful study guides, and navigable web pages
 - o How to design and implement a pre-show lecture, discussion, or performance
 - o How to plan and lead a post show discussion, both of old and new plays
 - o How to design a season of plays and performances
- Students are encouraged to work as dramaturgs in conjunction with the class, either for a Fresh Terrain piece, a New Works Festival piece, a play or performance at UT or in the community