

“The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**DRAMA 313-01: STUDY OF BLACK DRAMA/THEATRE**

**Fall 2012**

**T/TR 11:30-12.:50 pm**

**Room: 202 in Rose McCoy Auditorium**

**Instructor: Yohance Myles**

**E-mail:** yohance.f.myles @jsums.edu or yahyom@hotmail.com

**Office:** Room 112 Rose E. McCoy Auditorium.

**Office Hours:** MF 11-1pm; 2-4pm & W 2-4pm

**Number: (601) 979-1357 or (205) 427-7832 Main Office: (601) 979-2426**

**Required Textbook:**

Flowers, H.D. BLACKS IN AMERICAN THEATRE HISTORY: IMAGES, REALITIES, POTENTIAL. Blackbury, VA: Bellwether, Press, 2000 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

**Suggested play readings:** First Breeze of Summer by Leslie Lee; King Hedley by August Wilson; TopDog/Underdog by Suzan Lori Parks; Satellites by Diana Son.

**Supplementary Textbook:**

Hill, Errol, ed. THE THEATRE OF BLACK AMERICANS: A COLLECTION OF CRITICAL ESSAYS. NYC: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1990.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**A study of Black drama/theater in America through the African- American experience treating the contributions and involvement of the black artists from eighteenth century to present.**

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**This course is designed to study and explore the historical development of African-Americans contributions to dramatic arts in the United States. This course will present a universal perspective of African-American drama/theatre using literature, database, and scripts/plays written by and for African-Americans from the eighteenth century to the present. It is also designed to evaluate, analyze, and research the historical works and accomplishments of African-American dramatists, playwrights, and actors. Students will engage in higher conscious enlightenment which includes knowledge, facts, probing material that initiates open discussions that highlights deeper understanding and conscious development/enlightenment for the actor and non-actor.**

The course will allow students to:

- Recognize significant movements concerning African-American in drama.
- Identify the effects and influence of the African-American presence in drama.
- Examine the works of chosen playwrights whose work concern the life of African-Americans.
- Examine the writings of literary critics as they relate to African-American drama and discuss the possible and proven effects of this criticism on theatre audiences.
- Enhance critical writing skills through an analytical approach to all plays read.

## **METHOD OF STUDENT EVALUATION & GRADING SCALE**

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>
Daily & Ensemble Participation (Open discussion panels)	<b>200</b>	A = 900-1000
<b>Play Analysis I (1-5)</b>	<b>500 (100 x)</b>	B = 800-889
<b>Play Analysis II (6-10)</b>	<b>500 (100 x)</b>	C = 700-799
<b>Article I</b>	<b>50</b>	D = 600-699
<b>Article II</b>	<b>50</b>	F = 599 and Below
<b>Quiz I</b> (1890-1930's)	<b>100</b>	
<b>Quiz II</b> (1940-1950's)	<b>100</b>	
<b>Quiz III</b> (1960-1970's)	<b>100</b>	
<b>Quiz IV</b> (1980- present)	<b>100</b>	
<b>Midterm Exam-Report</b> – Selected material: The First Breeze of Summer/King Hedley/TopDog Underdog/Satellites	<b>200</b>	
Attend Department Production	<b>200</b>	
<b>Final Exam</b> (Decades project)	<b>250</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2350</b>	

**Method of Course Evaluation:** Jackson State University Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) and Instructor evaluations.

**Caveat:** The professor may make additional assignments throughout the course and/or provide an opportunity for the student to earn extra credit points if deem so.

## DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

<b>Daily &amp; Ensemble Participation</b>	
	Students will be expected to participate in class discussions with a positive and empathetic energy towards individual and team building. This includes feedback on given assignments/materials that serves as cognitive learning about said subject matter.
<b>Play Analysis I &amp; II</b>	
	Students will be required to write a 2-3 page critical analysis on plays selected from the Black Theatre Anthology of Plays.
<b>Article I &amp; II</b>	Students will be required to read assigned text and be prepared for an oral/written exam on information discussed in selected reading material.
<b>Quiz I (1890-1920's)</b>	
	Students will be tested on key points from this time period.
<b>Quiz II (1940-1950's)</b>	
	Students will be tested on key points from this time period.
<b>Quiz III (1960-1970's)</b>	
	Students will be tested on key points from this time period.
<b>Quiz IV (1980-present)</b>	
	Students will be tested on key points from this time period.
<b>Midterm Exam Report</b>	
	Students are required to read one of the suggested plays and turn in a 3-4 page written report on the play. Should include components of a critical analysis. See instructor for details.
<b>Attend Department Production</b>	
	Students will attend at least one department production.
<b>Final Exam</b>	
	Students will group together/individually create a decade project. The project should include playwrights of that time period, actors, music, art, politics, etc. See instructor for details.

## COURSE POLICIES

Attendance is important to achieving your best work in this class. Teamwork is the basis of any theatrical endeavor. That fact and the performative aspect of this class mean that attendance is **VITAL**. You need to be present to learn and practice skills introduced in class. A student's final grade will be reduced by one letter grade after three absences; the student will receive a grade of "F" after seven absences. **"Remember you are allowed three absences. It is wise to save these for emergencies."**

This course will involve a combination of lecture and group participation sessions. In order to foster an exciting, smooth, and intellectual course, I expect each member of the class to come to class ready to constructively support your colleagues (if an individual does not show up, the ensemble suffers and cannot reach its full potential), to read and study all assignments, to fully commit to participating in all discussions, and to contribute a positive energy in promoting a safe environment where all members are free to express ideas and thoughts. The choice not to actively participate in discussions will have a negative impact on your grading throughout the course. You will be deducted points for non participation in class activities.

Please arrive to class on time. Tardiness is unprofessional and is not fair to yourself and the class. **FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE LASTING IMPRESSIONS**. And, constantly coming in **5-10** minutes late does not mean that you have been attending class. If you come in after roll has been called, it is your responsibility to immediately bring it to the instructor's attention at the end of that class session. **REMEMBER 3 LATE TARDIES = 1 ABSENCE**.

*"Students are (WITH UNIVERSITY/DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL) required to participate within outside extra-curriculum activities. Some activities may require after school rehearsal hours. If your current workload is too heavy, you are welcome to take this course when you have adequate time. Do not take this statement lightly! Failure to adhere to this will eventually result in a student failing the course."* **Professor Myles.**

**If you are involved in any extra-curriculum activities, group organizations, or student productions it is your responsibility to turn in all approved University excused absences forms to the professor. Please remember to plan accordingly. Be mindful that regardless to the outside obligations one might have it is not the professor's responsibility to make accommodations for any activities that interfere with said class time or class work. We are all responsible adults so let's make sure we approach our work and responsibilities with a focused mind and integrity. NO EXCEPTIONS!**

**LATE WORK POLICY** – All work is due indicated on the course schedule. If a class presentation, discussion, quiz or exam is missed, students are allowed to make it up. The work must be made up within a reasonable time (within a week). If late work is turned in after the

one-week grace period, there will be an automatic 10% reduction of grade. All arrangements for missing work must be made prior to the time the assignment is scheduled. If such arrangements are not made, then no make-up options will be given and you will receive a zero for that assignment. Having a computer or printer problem at the last minute, having a paper due in another class, being involved in production, or wanting to leave early for breaks for whatever reason are not legitimate reasons for late work. **PLEASE PLAN AHEAD.**

**\*\* Make-up and late work will not be allowed in this course training. Due to the fact that this is an intellectual training, scholastic and participatory lecture course designed to serve all students who are enrolled. This course is designed to function at a rate that is comprehensive, cognitive, and complementary towards time and individual growth. Failure to complete work/tasks assigned by the professor will be determined by the prioritizing, focusing, and commitment of all students enrolled. Only “official and approved” University excuses can be used to make-up academic work.**

**Classroom Decorum.** There are certain basic standards of classroom decorum/conduct that should be adhered to by the members of this class. Good decorum/conduct does not eliminate appropriate humor, enjoyment or other features of a comfortable and pleasant classroom. Classroom decorum does, however, include the following:

- Display of respect for all members of the classroom, both your instructor and fellow students.
- Your professor is expected to give you constructive feedback for the assignments. If you are not in agreement with the feedback or would like to further discuss any comments, you do so at the instructor’s assigned office hours or by appointment.
  - Any disagreement expressed outside of office hours that may appear disrespectful and/or threatening to your professor and classmates will be immediately reported to campus security and appropriate action(s) will be taken.
- Attentiveness to and participation in lectures, group activities, workshops, and other classroom exercises.
- Avoidance of unnecessary disruptions during class sessions, such as private conversations, passing around gossip notes, sharing of food or candy, reading of magazines or newspapers, and doing work for other classes. Please place phones on vibrate at the beginning of class, as it can be disruptive to the rest of the class. Please do not respond to or initiate a text. **Due to the disruptive nature of cell phones and other technology use in the classroom, the professor will give no more than one warning to discontinue texting or any related activity. Excessive use of cell phone use will result in student(s) being asked to exit from the classroom. If problem continues will be asked to either drop class or appropriate actions will be take in having student removed for disruptive conduct and insubordination towards professor.**

- Avoidance of racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom community.
- These features of classroom decorum do not comprise an exhaustive list. Rather, they represent the minimal sort of behaviors that help to make the classroom a pleasant place for all concerned.
- **DO NOT ENTER OR EXIT THE ROOM WHEN OTHERS ARE PRESENTING.**

**Dress Attire:** This class is physical in nature. Please wear clothes that will allow you to breathe and move freely. Tight clothes and dangling jewelry may restrict movement. Guys, no hats, and please make sure your pants fit you. Ladies suggested clothes like jeans, shorts, or pants are required due to ample amounts of movement. IF POSSIBLE PLEASE NO SKIRTS. NO FLIP-FLOPS.

**Physical Inter “Action”:** Physical touch by acting instructor is quite common; often it is the only way to convey information to you. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation with any fellow classmates while working please meet with the professor at once. I cannot fix a problem unless I know about it.

**Adult Situations:** As we work to free our imaginations, there will be times when out of the ordinary we will explore ideas that may create harsh language/adult situations during class. These situations will be allowed as long as the class as a whole is comfortable. If situations/ language become offensive please let me know immediately so we can discuss the matter or switch the focus.

## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Jackson State University is committed to creating a community that affirms and welcomes persons from diverse backgrounds and experiences and supports the realization of their human potential. We recognize that there are differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic area. All persons are encouraged to respect the individual differences of others.

## SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator and Compliance Officer, P.O. Box 1799, Jackson, MS 39217, (601) 979-2485 as early as possible in the term.

## **GREVIANCES**

Any student who has a grievance and/or complaint must first discuss the grievance and/or complaint with the professor. If there is no resolution at the student/professor level, the student can then address his/her complaints through the appropriate channels of administration:

**Coordinator of Theatre Studies:** Dr. Nadia Bodie (Rose McCoy Building)

**Director of Theater:** Dr. Mark Henderson (Rose McCoy Building)

**Dean of College of Liberal Arts** Dr. Thomas Calhoun (Liberal Arts Building)

Please note that documentation of a meeting at each level is required before the student may request a meeting at the next level.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

**All acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on exams, plagiarizing or presenting another person's work as one's own, having another person write one's paper, fabricating research data, presenting excuses which are untrue for failing to meet academic and professional standards) are a violation of University Policy, which will entail appropriate penalties.**