

## **HUAS 6353.001 CREATING PLAYS (JO 4.914)**

**Syllabus: Fall, 2005**

**9:30 am – 12:15 pm Thursdays**

**Instructor: Gary D. Swaim**

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**Office Hours: By Appointment**

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### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

*The Art of Dramatic Writing*, Lajos Egri and Gilbert Miller

*Solving Your Script*, Jeffrey Sweet

*The Playwright's Process: Learning the Craft from Today's Dramatists*

Buzz McLaughlin

*Plays in One Act*, Edited by Daniel Halpern

*Twenty One-Acts from the Twenty Years at Humana Festival, 1975-1995*

Editors, Volansky & Dixon

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Our seminar focuses, primarily, on the analysis and writing of one-act plays. However, we'll be doing work together that explores a variety of dramatic types. Dramatic writing is currently in the throes of serious re-examination. What actually is this thing called a "play?" Are we just playing around as we write? The answer, occasionally, seems to be, "yes." At other times, clearly not. Edward Albee has said that "Any serious play is written to change people's point of view about something. Most serious plays are sociopolitical in intention. Merely being decorative is insufficient." While this is only one view of dramatic writing, it is not an insignificant one. Still, we may challenge its absolute validity.

Our readings and writings will be expansive. At all times, we'll be exploring character, story lines [telling a good story is critical, whatever the form of our writing], theatricality, theme, and a great deal more. Because this course will be conducted as a workshop, we'll be doing in-seminar and out-of-seminar writing exercises [with colleague critiques]. Each of these exercises will be designed to move our writing in the direction of a completed one-act play.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Each seminar/workshop member will participate in (1) in-workshop and out-of-workshop writing exercises, (2) reading and analyses of one-act plays from assigned readings, (3) the creation of a one-act play [arbitrarily suggested length between 45 and 60 pages], (4) a carefully considered critique of each colleague's one-act play [typewritten], and (5) a table reading of each seminar member's play. *Specific guidelines will be provided for each assignment.*

**Important note: each workshop member must provide typewritten copies of his/her script (for all "workshoppers," including myself).**

## **GRADING POLICY**

- Writing exercises and written/verbal critiques will constitute 40% of a seminar member's grade.
- The completed one-act play will constitute 60 % of a seminar member's grade.

*[Each seminar member should be certain that his/her work is submitted by the date requested.]*

## **OTHER POLICIES**

1. We are here to assist one another. This is not a competition! To this end, each workshop member should strive to be both direct and constructive in his/her critiquing efforts. If something written by a colleague doesn't work for you, be prepared to discuss constructively why it doesn't.
2. Do not embarrass yourself or me by a lack of preparation for your workshop (e.g., reading assignments, critiques, or other duties).
3. Get involved in workshop discussions. Challenge yourself, your colleagues, and me with your thinking. We are all, in the highest educational tradition, learners together.
4. Have some fun!. . .while you work!

**SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

*Subject to Change As Required*

- Aug. 18** **TAODW** pp. vi. – 31  
**TPP** pp. 11 – 41  
Introduction to Workshop  
In-Workshop Writing Exercise/Critiques
- 25** **TAODW** pp. 32 – 86  
**TPP** pp. 42 – 68  
**Selected Play**  
In-Workshop Writing Exercise/Critiques
- Sept. 1** **TAODW** pp. 87 – 124  
**TPP** pp. 69 – 112  
**Selected Play**  
In-Workshop Writing Exercise/Critiques
- 8** **TAODW** pp. 125 – 229  
**TPP** pp. 113 – 163  
**Selected Play**  
In-Workshop Writing Exercise/Critiques
- Sept. 15** **TAODW** pp. 230 – 297  
**TPP** pp. 164 – 278  
**Selected Play**  
In-Workshop Writing Exercise/Critiques
- 22** **Selected Play**  
In-Workshop Writing Exercise/Critiques
- 29** **One-Act Play Due** (copies for colleagues and me)  
**Selected Play**
- Oct. 6** Table Reading of Plays (with critiques due)
- 13** Table Reading of Plays (with critiques due)
- 20** Table Reading of Plays (with critiques due)
- 27** Table Reading of Plays (with critiques due)

**Swaim (4)**

<b>Nov.</b>	<b>3</b>	Table Reading of Plays (with critiques due)
	<b>10</b>	Table Reading of Plays (with critiques due)
	<b>17</b>	Table Reading of Plays (with critiques due)
	<b>24</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>
<b>Dec.</b>	<b>1</b>	Workshop review and conclusion

- **Guidelines will be provided for all assignments, and additional readings from other texts will be assigned over the semester.**