THR 360 S-L in Theatre: Applied Dramaturgy  
Fall 2017

**Course Dates:** Wednesday evenings & other sessions: September 5th – December 6th, 2017

**Meetings:** (*Generally*, we meet at 5:00 for a light meal and then see a show from 7:00-10 PM. Or we meet on campus 6:00-8:45 for a longer class session. Some class meetings will also be individually scheduled sessions (check the calendar for details).

**Instructor:** Dr. Robin Mello (please call me Robin). I prefer the pronouns ‘she’ or “zi.”

- **Email:** rmello@uwm.edu
- **Office:** Theatre 220/Music 135
- **Office hours:** Tuesdays 11:00-1:00 PM & 5:00-6:30 PM, (except 10/10 & 11/7), or by appointment
- **Cell Phone:** (text or call): 414-469-9279

**Investment of time:**
11 seminar sessions 1 hrs. x 11=11 hours
7 Productions 2 hrs. x 7 = 14 hours
Assigned homework 2 hrs x 15 weeks = 30 hours
Total semester commitment 125 hours
Weekly average (using 16 weeks) ~**3.4 hours per week**

**Course Description:** THR 360 Applied Dramaturgy is supported by the Center for Undergraduate Research and the Department of Theatre. It is taught in seminar format and guides students in becoming dramaturges.

It is designed to be fun and interactive. We will see at least 7 professional and university theatre performances and will meet before productions for dinner and conversation. During our discussions, we will explore the life of the play, its history, and impact. Student will also present their work to THR 305 students, and create a dramaturgical submission for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region 3 competition. Taking this course also makes students eligible to serve as dramaturg in Theatre Department productions for a small stipend.

**Eligible students:** High achieving students with a 3.5 GPA within their major and/or ACT scores 23 or higher. Honors College students are automatically eligible for this seminar.

**Texts:**

- **Required:** Most of the readings and texts we will use are going to be selected in your seminar sessions – and during your library research. Expect to read at least 3 plays and a minimum of 5 articles. The following websites are essential reading:

**Websites**

- **LMDA:** [http://www.lmda.org/dramaturgy](http://www.lmda.org/dramaturgy)
- **KCACTF:** [http://kcactf3.org/dramaturges.htm](http://kcactf3.org/dramaturges.htm)

**Recommended**

- *The Norton Anthology of Drama: The Nineteenth Century to the Present, Volume 2* (third
Curricular scope of this course:

- Gaining a working knowledge of research ethics and best practices.
- Studying critical dramaturgical approaches and methods.
- Examining the history of theatre productions and texts.
- Examining how theatre productions and texts are currently produced in response to contemporary social issues.
- Exploring dramaturgy by interacting with archival materials.
- Exploring dramaturgical practices for making new works of theatre.
- Presenting findings at THR 305 seminars, online in D2L, KCACTF, UWM productions, and in pre/post show discussions with the public.

University Policies: [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/1895.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/1895.pdf)

Course Goals:

- To develop skills in the basic research processes of dramaturgy, including historiography and archival research, critical perspectives and narrative inquiry, performance theory, literary analysis.
- To experience professional theatre as it is developed and performed in the Milwaukee community.
- To develop critical and aesthetic perspectives.
- To communicate dramaturgical perspectives and approaches to the public.

How to succeed: You will succeed if you do all the work in an exemplary fashion, read and follow the directions, study and view all materials, explore, actively participate, and submit your work within the established deadlines. Active participation is considered requisite for everything we do in this class.

- **Audience Behavior:** We are ‘out and about’ in the Milwaukee arts scene. Dress neatly and respectfully when attending the theater. No recreational drugs or alcohol is permitted. Turn off your personal communication devices (in off/silenced mode) during the ENTIRE course experience unless you are specifically requested or permitted to do so. Rude, disorderly, or disrespectful behavior, or plagiarism may result in your being administratively dropped from the class or summarily failed.
- **Attendance:** You are expected to complete all assignments in order to get a passing grade. Occasionally, there is a REAL emergency. When that happens, you are not penalized for having a problem outside of your control (a real emergency). There are alternative assignments available. Alternative assignments are assigned at the discretion of the instructor and after you have met with Robin to discuss what you need.
- **What is a real emergency?** Answer: Real and unplanned events that pertain to your personal (or your family’s) safety, death, or acute illness and other “Acts of God” (like blizzards or tornados). If you encounter a transportation-related problem get to seminar or the theater as soon as you can. Being late is better than not showing up at all.
- **None of these reasons are real (i.e. excused) emergencies:**
• Missing the bus or any similar transportation problem.
• Losing your phone.
• You are/were in a show and the production that took up your time so you couldn’t complete an assignment.
• You forgot or misread the calendar and syllabus and “didn’t realize that the assignment was due.”
• Roommates and friends/family needed to socialize so you did not have enough time.
• Computers or other technologies broke; and/or you had no access to the Internet; and/or there was no possible way for you to find a computer or Internet connection anywhere; and/or your mobile data plan didn’t work.
• You were on a vacation, took time off, or went on a trip.
• You had a hangover.
• Your dog/cat/pet was ill.
• Your roommate’s dog/cat/pet was ill.
• Your boss scheduled you for lots more hours at work than originally planned.

• What to do if you have an emergency? Email AND call or text Robin’s cell: 414-469-9279 ASAP. When you send a text please include your name in the text.
• Getting there: Each student is responsible transportation to and from the restaurants and theaters. Many students group their resources and travel together via public transportation, Uber, or car pool.
• Tickets: The course pays for tickets and some meals. You will also get a small stipend for successful dramaturgical work for one of the Theatre Departments’ productions.

Grades: Students are expected to complete all the assignments. If a student encounters a problem with completing a learning task let Robin know and ask for an extension. Late submissions will result in lower grades but it is best to complete assignments.

Grades are evaluated using the following rubric/scoring:

A = all learning tasks completed, all portions completed in an exemplary fashion and on time.
B = all learning tasks completed, all portions completed well with high quality work and on time.
C = all learning tasks completed, all portions of completed satisfactorily.
D = all or some of the learning tasks were partially completed or work was unsatisfactory, lacking, or consistently late.
F = all learning tasks were not completed or were completed in a way that did not meet standards (see rubrics in D2L), some portions were not completed, and/or were missing.
INC = Students are awarded an INC grade if any learning tasks are not complete. An INC defaults to an F grade at the start of the next semester. If you receive an INC grade you will be allowed to redo or complete make-up work during the default period only. In other words, if your INC defaults to an F the F is your final grade.

Guidelines: Learning happens through feedback, study and reading, humane and respectful interactions, research, thoughtful reflection, discussions that share ideas, and through creative and written projects.
Students are expected to *make this a learning experience that works for them and to follow these guidelines*:

- Be curious.
- Use your common sense and be compassionate to yourself and others.
- Empathize with others.
- Show up prepared and ready to work.
- Disagree respectfully
- Acknowledge diversity
- Dividing your attention is rude and stops you from getting the most out of this course. Turn off your cell phones and other devices unless specifically needed for course activities.
- Organize your work ahead of deadlines.
- Communicate frequently.
- Ask questions.
- Mistakes are part of learning.
- If you need a standing ovation, ask for it.

**Useful vocabulary:** In this class, we will be using the following language.

- **Aesthetics:** *a set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty, especially in art, or the branch of philosophy that deals with the principles of beauty and artistic taste.*
- **Catharsis:** *when a performance or piece of art allows you to release energy thereby providing relief from strong or repressed emotions.*
- **Dramaturgy:** *a way to look at and research plays. It is the practice of looking at the cultural, personal, ideological, philosophical, and historical content of the play as well as the history of the play's original production history.*
- **Dramaturg/Dramaturge:** *A person who supports the development of the performance/play using dramaturgical skills and methods.*
- **Efficacious:** *successful in producing a desired or intended result; effective.*
- **Methexis:** *group experience in theatre when an audience participates, creates, and improvises in response to, or as part of, the performance.*
- **On Time:** *Being at least 10 minutes early.*
- **Intermission:** *interval after the first or second act of a play. Most intermissions last 10-15 minutes. Many plays do not have intermissions.*
- **Praxis:** *change or shift in perspective that often happens as a result of fully experiencing a work of art.*
- **Run Time:** *The time it takes to perform the play.*
- **Theatre vs. Theater:** *TheatER is the building and/or stage on which a play is performed and theatre is enacted. Not all plays take place in a theater. TheaRE is the artistic and academic field of study. As in: "I went to the theater to study theatre with my professor."*
## Calendar & Learning Tasks

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>4:30-5:30 PM &amp; 6:00-8:30</td>
<td>La Sala*</td>
<td>Topic: Orientation—what is dramaturgy?</td>
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<td>Seminar #1: This is an organizational meeting.</td>
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<td>Bring your semester schedule &amp; a hard copy print out of the syllabus.</td>
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*Where is La Sala?: We will meet just off campus at La Sala restaurant (2613 East Hampshire St- just off of Downer and across from Mitchell Hall) for a quick meal (preordered by Robin).

**What is due?** BEFORE the seminar please post your contact info and dietary restrictions in D2L (due by 9/5). Take the Dramaturgical Challenge (in D2L) and come ready to answer it and win the prize. Also, be prepared to organize schedules, share your thoughts, interests, and prior experience with theatre and research. SILENT SKY/26 MILES groups will be assigned.

**Other information:** Expect to attend THR 305 (6:00-8:30) in KW 1150 after the seminar. The courses are linked. This THR 305 session is mandatory.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>9/7-9/26</th>
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<th>ComedySportz &amp; D2L</th>
<th>You are working solo and online (D2L). Each of you will make an appointment to meet with Robin solo during this time.</th>
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**What is due?** Attend one *Brink* performance on 9/9 or 9/10 OR a 10:00 PM performance at ComedySportz (they are on Saturday and Sunday—all dates and information in D2L). Tickets will be waiting for you at ComedySportz. Identify yourself as a THR 360 student. They will also ask for your name and student ID.

Submit an aesthetic response—use the template posted in D2L. Your essay is predicated on the ComedySportz or *Brink* performance (due 9/13).

Make an appointment with Robin to meet and discuss your involvement in the course.

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<tr>
<th>9/13</th>
<th>6:00-8:30 PM</th>
<th>KW 1150</th>
<th>Seminar #2: Ethics and practices—first steps</th>
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This seminar is a full class session. We will explore ways theatre impacts audiences, viewing and discussing art, and basic dramaturgical inquiry processes.

**What is due?** Reflective journal entry due in Discussion in D2L. Play choice for final project.

Take the Dramaturgical Challenge (in D2L) and come ready to answer it and win the prize.

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<tr>
<th>10/4</th>
<th>5:00-6:30 PM &amp; 7:00-10:00</th>
<th>Marcus Center</th>
<th>Seminar #3: Check in over a meal then Attend the production of RENT.</th>
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**What is due?** Reflective Journal Entry due in D2L.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>10/10</th>
<th>11:30 PM</th>
<th>D2L Dropbox</th>
<th>Your group’s dramaturgy Ppt is due. Use</th>
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template in D2L as a guide.

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<th>DATE</th>
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<th>PLACE</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>6:00-7:00</td>
<td>KW 1150</td>
<td>Seminar #4: Communicating Dramaturgy</td>
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What is due? Your dramaturgy group will present your work to students in THR 305. Each group will give a 12 min. dramaturgical Ppt presentation and take Q&A—SILENT SKY [Grp 1] & 26 MILES [Grp 2]

Take the Dramaturgical Challenge (in D2L) and come ready to answer it and win the prize.

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<tr>
<td>10/12-10/25</td>
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<td>D2L</td>
<td>Choose a play that you will study the rest of this semester.</td>
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What is due? You are choosing a play to investigate. Create and submit the dramaturgy play (See D2L for details) in Drop-box (due 10/20). We will follow the KCACTF guidelines. Your final project will be submitted for adjudication at Region 3 conference in January.

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<td>10/18</td>
<td>5:00-6:30 &amp; 7-9:30</td>
<td>TBA &amp; Next Act Theatre</td>
<td>Seminar #4: Role of dramaturg in creating new work</td>
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What is due? This seminar takes place over a meal and before SILENT SKY at Next Act. At our dinner seminar, we will discuss responses dramaturgy of new work.

Take the Dramaturgical Challenge (in D2L) and come ready to answer it and win the prize.

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<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>5:00-6:30 &amp; 7-9:30</td>
<td>Ma Fishers &amp; KW 508</td>
<td>Seminar #5: Critique of SILENT SKY</td>
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What is due? This seminar takes place over a meal and before 26 MILES at KW 508. At the dinner seminar, we will discuss SILENT SKY.

Progress report on dramaturgy project due in D2L.

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<tr>
<td>11/1-11/7</td>
<td>As scheduled</td>
<td>THR 220, Library, and D2L</td>
<td>Seminar #6 &amp; 7: Inside the life of the play</td>
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We meet this week for library orientation and in small group seminars during the day. Here we will explore research on the life of the play as if you are a character inside the play AND oral report on final presentations progress.

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<tr>
<td>11/8-11/14</td>
<td>As scheduled</td>
<td>THR 220, Library, and D2L</td>
<td>Seminar #8: review of literature &amp; history</td>
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What is due? We meet this week in small group seminars during the day. Here we will report on final project progress and explore directorial and designer vision and intent—how do they change over time? How does this help realize (or change) the meaning of the text and the audience's relationship?

Reflective Journal entry due in D2L
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<tr>
<td>11/15</td>
<td>5:00-6:30</td>
<td>La Sala &amp; UWM MS Theatre</td>
<td>Seminar #9: We discuss how things are going, etc. After the seminar, we will attend MAJOR BARBARA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/18</td>
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<td>D2L &amp; KCACTF</td>
<td>Online application (intent to apply)</td>
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<td>What is due? Submit your online application form to KCACTF. Upload the response/cover sheet they send you in D2L.</td>
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<td>11/22</td>
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<td>TG</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break.</td>
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<td>11/27</td>
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<td>In D2L</td>
<td>KCACTF award submissions due in D2L</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
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<td>In D2L</td>
<td>KCACTF approval</td>
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<td>What is due? Robin' official letter of approval will be posted in D2L. Download this and add it for use this in your materials packet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Individual meeting during day</td>
<td><strong>KCACTF DEADLINE</strong></td>
<td>Meet with Robin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is due? Include Cover letter, Application Form, and Materials all mailed or emailed to KCACTF.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/6</td>
<td>5:00-6:30 &amp; 7:00-10:00</td>
<td>TBA &amp; Pabst</td>
<td>Seminar #10: Reflection on practice, then we walk to Pabst to see A CHRISTMAS CAROL.</td>
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<td>12/12</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Theatre Lobby</td>
<td>Installation of dramaturgy presentation.</td>
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<td>What is due? installations of final presentations in Theatre Lobby.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/13</td>
<td>6:00-8:30</td>
<td>KW 1150</td>
<td>Presentations in THR 305</td>
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Responding to Br!nk-New Works of Theatre or ComedySportz

*At the top of your essay include your name, your major, and what pronoun you use in reference to yourself.

**Note the date and time of the ComedySportz show or the Br!nk play you attended.

**Paragraph 1 (Efficaciousness):** How did the show effect/impact you? Why do you think you responded in the way you did? Do you think that the performers/director wanted you to respond in the way you did? Did you experience catharsis? Did you experience praxis? Give examples.

**Paragraph 2 (Methexis):** What did the performers do to engage the audience as a group? Identify one or two things that you observed happening to the audience as a whole. What things did the performers do to do create group responses? How did the performers use humor to get the audiences’ attention? Did the audience participate in shaping/inspiring the performance? Give examples.

**Paragraph 3 (Social-Cultural context):** What did you see or hear that made you laugh? Why were these things funny to you? Did the humor build community or divide the audience? What made you laugh and why? Comedy Improv—as an art form—originated in the Midwest. What regional forces or dynamics contributed to this?

**Paragraph 4 (Aesthetics):** What parts of the show did you like? What didn't you like? Were their things that confused or upset you? Does ComedySportz have value? What were your thoughts, feelings, and experiences at the ComedySportz show?

**Paragraph 5 (The playing space & design elements):** At ComedySportz the stage, audience set up, lights, lobby, and even the parking lot influence how the audience perceives their experience. What design elements did you observe that were intentional? Do you think they added to the experience or distracted from it? Give examples.

**Paragraph 6 (Performers and performance skills):** Who were the performers? Choose two and specifically discuss two performers’ skills, choices, and efficacy.

**Paragraph 7 (Text/script):** If a script is different all the time is it a script? Do performers need pre-written scripts in order to create theatre?

**Paragraph 8 (Intent):** What was the intent of the performance? What was the point that the artists were trying to make? Did they succeed? How and in what ways? Be specific.

**Paragraph 9 (Coordinating elements):** Discuss the flow of the production. Where did it start and where did it end? How did this impact your experience? What threads, flow, and/or structures did you observe that added to (or subtracted from) the experience as a whole?

**Paragraph 10 (Checking in):** How are things going in this course, so far, for you? What questions do you have?
**Group Dramaturgy Assignment**

Create a presentation, which should include a Ppt and interactive activities for 26 Miles or Silent Sky. Submit the Ppt in D2L and be ready to present your findings to THR 305 on October 11. Each dramaturgical report must include answers to the following dramaturgical questions:

- Where was the play originally produced and performed and why?
- When the play was originally produced and what did critics think of it at that time?
- What did the playwright, first director, first actors, and first designer have to say about their work when the play originally premiered?
- In this production what can we expect to see? What does the director have to say about this production?
- What was the social and political context of the play in it’s time—what socio-cultural relevance does the play have in 2017?

Each dramaturgical presentation should cover the points brought up by the questions.

Submit your notes and an outline of what you will be presenting at your seminar the Monday prior to your presentation. Submit these in the dropbox for Dramaturgy.

**KCACTF Dramaturgy Challenge**

All students will be submit a Dramaturgical submission to KCACTF Region 3 (see D2L for details). Plays to choose from are: Major Barbara, Stupid Fucking Bird, 9 to 5, 12 Ophelias, Book of Days, 26 Miles, Orphan Train.

Submissions include statements about the play, production, and reflections on your own research practice, letters of support and letters from designers/directors and performers.

Submissions should be creative and get the public involved in the history and development of the play.

Submissions should include technology and interactive forms of communication (a website, film, interactive video, hands-on components, etc.).

Submissions should have a strong visual component and also give audience members a way to find out more information for themselves.

Submissions may include audience feedback and evaluation tools as well.

Detailed information about this is in D2L.