Fall 2019
Playwriting I (Theatre 359-001)
Alvaro Saar Rios
Classroom: Mitchell 375
Office hours: Thursday 12-1; or by appointment
My office: THR 280
Email: riosa@uwm.edu

OVERVIEW
Learning objectives
By the end of the class, students will be able to:
1) Generate ideas and plans for writing dramatic stories by using poems, personal stories and several other exercises.
2) Edit dramatic dialogue.
3) Provide constructive criticism to fellow students.
4) Compose short plays, scenes and a full-synopsis for a one-act play.

We’ll achieve these by doing the following:
1) Reading and discussing short plays and/or scenes.
2) Identifying and practicing various forms of playwriting.
3) Workshopping peers work.

REQUIRED
There is no required book for this course.

*Some class assignments will require you to bring enough photocopies for the whole class.

RECOMMENDED
Backwards & Forwards by David Ball.
The Playwrights Guidebook by Stuart Spencer
Bird by Bird by Annie Lamott
On Writing by Stephen King
The Dramatic Writer’s Companion by Will Dunne

**You do not need to buy these texts. They are just good resources for aspiring playwrights.**

POLICIES

1) This is class depends on your participation. Absences can and will dramatically affect your grade. You are allowed one free absence. Every absence thereafter is 5 points off your participation grade. Four absences will result in a failing grade.

2) Work is due when it is due. No late assignments are accepted. No assignments can be made up. Everything must be TYPED. Except for Writing Assignments #1-3, you are responsible for submitting your scenes in Play Format.

3) Read all required plays and handouts before you come to class on the days on which they’re assigned. I’ll expect you to contribute to the day’s discussion, and your
contributions count toward your class participation grade. All handouts and plays can be found on the Canvas site for our course.

4) All writing assignments are due in hardcopy. If you are going to be absent on the day a writing assignment is due, please email it to the instructor by no later than 2pm on the day it is due.

5) Some writing assignments will be presented in class. If you do not present on the assigned workshop day, you will receive an F for that specific writing assignment.

6) Extra Credit assignments can be arranged for 5 points. A maximum of 10 points of extra credit will be allowed. This must be arranged/approved by me before the last two weeks of class. PLEASE check with me if you’re unsure of your progress/grade. Possibilities for extra credit include (but are not limited to):
   - read an extra play of my choice and write a 1-page response paper.
   - attend a professional play or reading and write a 1-page response paper

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments #1-12</td>
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<td>Final Portfolio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Assignment</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<th>FINAL PORTFOLIO</th>
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<tr>
<td>Your final portfolio will consist of:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Revised short play</td>
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<td>• Revised full synopsis of one-act play</td>
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<td>• Two or more scene for a one-act play. 10+ pages.</td>
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<th>CLASS SESSIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September 5</strong></td>
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<td>DISCUSSION:</td>
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<td>HW for next week:</td>
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<td><strong>Writing Assignment #1.</strong> Must be typed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Write 1-page scene from your bad play.</td>
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<td>• Write a 1-sentence synopsis for Eukiah</td>
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| Sept. 12 |
| DUE IN CLASS: | Writing Assignment #1. (1 copy) |
DISCUSSION: Writing Assignment #1, “36 Assumptions,” Eukiah, Group work—“What makes this day different” synopsis

HW for next week: Read Anything for You

Read Seeing the Light

Writing Assignment #2. Must be typed.
- Write a 1-sentence synopsis for each play
- Explain “What makes this day different?” for each play

Sept. 19
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #2 (1 copies)
DISCUSSION: Writing Assignment #2, Wants, elements of a short play, group work
HW for next week: Writing Assignment #3. Must be typed.
- Write a short 2-character play based on instructor’s guidelines.
- Write a 1-sentence synopsis of your short play

Sept. 26
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #3. (1 copy unless otherwise instructed)
DISCUSSION: Playwriting format, Writing Assignment #3
HW for next week: Read Handout KCACTF Play Format Example

Writing Assignment #4. Must be typed.
- Write a short play. Utilize at least 3 short play elements. 10 pages maximum. Playwriting format.
- Write a one-sentence synopsis of your short play.
- Bring food to share. (optional)

October 3
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #4 (1 copy unless you were “volunteered”)
DISCUSSION: Writing Assignment #4
HW for next week: Read Handout “Stage Directions”

October 10
DUE IN CLASS: n/a
DISCUSSION: Stage directions, In Class Assignment—“Stage Directions Scene,” Creating Characters
HW for next week: Writing Assignment #5.
- Rewrite Writing Assignment #4. One character should represent a worst trait.
- Bring food to share. (optional)

October 17
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #5 (1 copy unless you were “volunteered”)
DISCUSSION: Writing Assignment #5
HW for next week: Read Handout Ballad of Mulan
Writing Assignment #6. Must be typed.
- After reading “Ballad of Mulan,” what moments could you see visually? List three specific moments.
• Write a 2-3 sentence synopsis of “Ballad of Mulan”

Extra Credit
• Attend performance of *On the Wings of a Mariposa*—Oct. 18-November 10, Marcus Center for Performing Arts
  Pay-what-you-can performance, Tues. Oct. 22 @ 7pm

October 24
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #6 (1 copy)
DISCUSSION: Adaptation, “Ballad of Mulan,” facts of the world, Group work—Turning a Fact of the World into a Scene
HW for next week: Writing Assignment #7. Must be typed.
  • Write a 2-3 page scene based on a “Ballad of Mulan” fact of the world. Play format.
Extra Credit.
  • Submit your short play to KCACTF. Check Canvas for more details.

October 31
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #7. (1 copy unless otherwise instructed)
DISCUSSION: Writing Assignment #7, Group Work—“Ideas for Modern Adaptation,” Luchadora! full synopsis
HW for next week: Writing Assignment #8
  • Write a full synopsis of your modern adaptation idea

November 7
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #8 (1 copy)
DISCUSSION: Writing Assignment #8, Play ideas, Group Work
HW for next week: Writing Assignment #9
  • Write three to five ideas for a one-act play. Each idea should be no more than a paragraph. You will bring in enough copies for your assigned group

November 14
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #9
DISCUSSION: Writing Assignment #9, Group Work—“Play Ideas”
HW for next week: Writing Assignment #10
  • Write a scene from your play idea. 2-4 pages. Group A will bring copies for the whole class. Group B will submit to Canvas.
Discussion Assignment
  • Revise your play idea and post it in the Discussion area by November 21
Bring food to share. (optional)

November 21
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #10 (Group A brings copies for the whole class)
DISCUSSION: Workshop Guidelines; Workshop Writing Assignment #10 for Group A
HW for next week: Writing Assignment #11
• Write a full-synopsis of your play idea. Submit to Canvas by Dec. 5

Writing Assignment #12
• Write another scene from your play. 2-4 pages. Group B will bring copies for the whole class on Dec. 5. Group A will submit to Canvas.

Bring food to share. (optional)

November 28
No Class. Happy Day Off!

December 5
DUE IN CLASS: Writing Assignment #12 (Group B bring copies for whole class.)
DISCUSSION: Workshop Writing Assignment #12 for Group B
HW for next week: Read Handout “Final Portfolio Guidelines”
Bring food to share. (optional)

December 12
DUE IN CLASS: N/A
DISCUSSION: Final Portfolio Guidelines, End of Class Group Work
HW: Prepare Final Portfolio

Dec. 17 (Tuesday)
Final Portfolio Due in Canvas by no later than 5pm. No exceptions.
RUBRIC

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS #1-12  (5 points)
5 = assignment is complete, excellent format, and shows significant thought
4 = assignment is complete; minor formatting errors; shows a good deal of thought
3 = assignment is complete; at least 3 formatting errors; or it shows adequate thought.
2 = assignment is complete; major formatting errors; and it shows less than adequate thought.
1 = missing copies; incomplete; not in playwriting format; not typed; and it shows little thought.

EVALUATION

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<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>93 – 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 – 92.99</td>
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<td>87 – 89.99</td>
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<td>83 – 86.99</td>
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<td>80 – 82.99</td>
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<td>77 – 79.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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<td>59.99 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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Important Information for Students: The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) is dedicated to a safe, supportive and non-discriminatory learning environment. It is the responsibility of all undergraduates and graduate students to familiarize themselves with University policies, please see: http://uwm.edu/secu/syllabus-links/