

Fall 2011
**UGS 303 Difficult Dialogues:
Talking About Race Through Performance**
T 2-5
WIN 2.112
#64065

Instructors:

Dr. Charlotte Canning
WIN 2.158
charlottecanning@mail.utexas.edu
232-5338
Dr. Omi Osun Joni L. Jones
GRG 222
jonijones@austin.utexas.edu
471-4320

Teaching Assistant:

Carrie Kaplan
WIN Atrium
Carrie.kaplan@gmail.com

Office Hours:

Canning	TTH 11-12, and by appointment
Jones	W1-3, and by appointment
Kaplan	F 1-2, and by appointment

Course Description: This course examines how theatrical art can be a productive tool for generating fruitful discussions around race. Race remains a difficult subject to discuss in the 21st century US, this class will look at how we discuss race, and why, as well as how we might change those discussions to be more productive. Through an examination of theatrical productions and texts, students will create analyses concerning racial formation, the role of aesthetics in constructing race, the racial politics of art, and the dynamics of healthy dialogue.

Course Materials:

Course packet. Available at Abel's Copies.

- Abel's Copy Shop, 715 W. 23rd St., 472-5353.
- Two visits to Abel's are typically (though not always) required; one to order and pay for the packet and one to pick it up. Consider calling and charging your packet beforehand and then going once to pick it up. You will need to have your course packet to prepare for class.

Attendance at *Quiet Frenzy*, free but limited seating. Go to <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/caaas/events/19015> for more information.

Attendance at a screening of *The Help*. Austin-area movie theatres.

Week Eight:

Tues., Oct. 11 I: Race as Performance Part 1
 II: Race as Performance Part 2
 READ: Smith, Anna Deveare. *Twilight, Los Angeles*.
 READ: Ward, Douglas Turner. *Day of Absence*.
 DUE: Reading response

Week Nine

Tues., Oct. 18 I: Remembering History Part 1: Screening
 II: Remembering History Part 2: Discussion of screening and reading
 READ: McCauley, Robbie. *Sally's Rape* (P).
 SEE: *La Carpa* (in-class screening)
 DUE: Reading response

Week Ten:

Tues., Oct. 25 Writing Workshops **DUE:** Review #2 proposal

Week Eleven:

Tues., Nov. 1 I: Positionality
 II: Positionality
 READ: Wilson, August. "The Ground on Which I Stand." *The American Theatre Reader: Essays and Conversations from American Theatre Magazine*. Eds. American Theatre Magazine Staff. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2009. 152-62 (P).
 READ: Brustein, Robert. "Subsidized Separatism." *The American Theatre Reader: Essays and Conversations from American Theatre Magazine*. 163-67 (P).
 READ: Wilson, August. *The American Theatre Reader: Essays and Conversations from American Theatre Magazine*. 168-70 (P).
 READ: Gates, Henry Louis. "The Chitlin' Circuit." *New Yorker*. 3 November 1997: 44- (P).
 DUE: *The Help* revised review

Week Twelve:

Tues., Nov. 8 Poster workshop

Week Thirteen:

Tues., Nov. 15 I: Globalization Part 1
 II: Globalization Part 2
 READ: TBA
 BRING: Your favorite hip hop/rap song.
 DUE: Review #2

Week Fourteen:

Tues., Nov. 22 Final Presentations

Fall Break (Nov. 24-26)

Week Fifteen:

Tues. Nov. 29 I: Final Presentations
 II: Wrap up

Course Requirements:

Papers

- There are two kinds of papers in this course: reading response papers and reviews. You will complete five response papers and two reviews.
- The five response papers will be in conversation with one (1) of the week's assigned readings (that is, you do not have to write about all readings in weeks where there are multiple assignments) and will be in accordance with the week's writing prompt which will be posted on the course's Blackboard site.
- Of the five papers, the one with the lowest grade will be dropped, and four will count for your final grade. All five must be completed, however. One of these papers will be reviewed for a separate grade. The paper to be revised will be chosen in conversation with the instructors.
- One review will be of the movie released this summer, *The Help* (which you must see at an area theatre). This will also form the basis for one of the two presentations. This paper will also be revised for a separate grade.
- The second review will be of an event of your choosing.
- You must propose this event as the subject of your review and have it approved by the instructors. The proposal will not be graded but failure to complete it will result in an automatic deduction of a full grade (A to B, for example) from the review grade.
- For due dates of the various assignments, please see the "Class Sessions" portion of the syllabus.
- All writing assignments are thoroughly discussed in separate handouts; please refer to the course's Blackboard site.

Presentations

- There are two presentations in this course: one in conjunction with your review of *The Help*, the other a poster session in response to the class focus.
- In the class session on *The Help* you each will present a short version of your review, as well as a summarization of a review or response that was published this summer. We will check in during a class session to make sure you each have a different review. We will then have a roundtable discussion of your findings.
- The final presentation is a poster session on your response the course's subject. This is a visual form that you supplement with a verbal presentation.
- For due dates of the various assignments, please see the "Class Sessions" portion of the syllabus.
- All presentation assignments are thoroughly discussed in separate handouts; please refer to the course's Blackboard site.

Participation

- Spoken participation in this class is essential, both to maintain a high level of discussion and to encourage you to practice your spoken communication skills. You should try to contribute to the discussion every day with thoughtful comments. Be fully present – no text messaging, no note-passing, no sidebar conversations.
- Work to listen well and to respond graciously and generously (which, of course, doesn't mean necessarily agreeing with) other students' ideas. We want our conversations to be lively, committed, and productively contentious.
- Participation grades will be given five times during the semester. Each grade will be up to 4 points on your final grade, for a total of 20 points, or 20%.

- “4” means that you have consistently come to class and participated fully and thoughtfully in conversation, without dominating, and that you have submitted all work in a timely manner.
- “3” means that you have come to class and occasionally participated fully, but more often remained attentive to the goings-on and that you have submitted all work in a timely manner. In short, you are keeping up with work, but remaining on the sidelines at times.
- “2” means that you appear to be consistently listening, but you are not always contributing to the conversation and/or you have occasionally turned in late work.
- “1” means that you are appearing in class, but you are not prepared to work or to listen and/or you have, more often than not, turned in late work. I share these grades throughout the semester so that you can follow your progress. If you find yourself receiving a low grade, use the information as an opportunity to talk about your progress and our expectations.

Grading and Attendance:

- Grades are calculated according to the percentages below.
- We expect you to read all assignments closely and to participate actively in our discussions, whether about reading materials, the politics and practices of teaching, or our practical exercise sessions. Learning how to offer constructive feedback and learning how to gracefully accept criticism will be an important component of the course.
- This class uses the +/- system.
- Quite simply, grades are assessed as follows (note that +/- grades indicating shadings of the criteria offered for full letter grades):

An “A” course grade means that the student has not missed any classes and has arrived promptly each day, prepared to participate in the session’s discussions. An “A” means that a large amount of diligence and initiative has gone into your writing, thinking, and teaching demonstrations this semester. Your responses are well-written and pose useful questions for yourself and the class to ponder; your in-class presentations are substantive and concise; your participation in class discussions is thoughtful, succinct, and moves the conversation forward; in the progress of researching and thinking about dramaturgy, you’ve clearly expanded your knowledge and your skills

A “B” grade means that you’ve missed several classes or come late several times; that you don’t participate as consistently or productively in session discussions; that you don’t seem to have observations to make about the reading; that your responses seem written hurriedly, without a lot of thought; that your presentations and papers are slapdash; and that you still haven’t risen to the challenge of this course.

A “C” grade means that you’ve missed many classes and/or consistently come late; that you don’t appear to have read the discussion assignments; that your approach to your presentations and written assignments is laconic and disorganized; that you don’t appear motivated to do well; and that mastering the skills of the course is not a top priority for you.

A “D” grade

An “F” grade means you have barely done any of the work, missed classes regularly, and generally disengaged from the course content and process.

Course Grading

Reading Response Papers (5, best 4 @ 10% each)	40%
Revised Response Paper (1 @ 5%)	5%
Reviews (2 @ 10% each)	20%
Revised Review of <i>The Help</i> (1 @ 5%)	5%
Presentations (2 @ 5% each)	10%

Participation

20%

Attendance

- Attendance is Mandatory. You will be expected to be in attendance at all classes. Tardiness will not be tolerated. If you are not in attendance when the roll is taken, you will be marked "ABSENT."
- Students are allowed two (2) absences for the semester. Each absence beyond two (2) will affect the Final Course Grade as indicated below. Absences for presentations can never be excused.
- Each absence above two will result in the reduction of the final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. A final grade of A would become a B if the student had missed three classes beyond the permitted two. A final grade of B+ would become a B- with two classes missed over the permitted two.
- Absences of eight or more will result in automatic failure of the course with a final grade of F regardless of the quality of the course work.
- In the event of a medical emergency: contact the instructor and submit written support from the attending physician. (UT Health Center sign-in records are NOT acceptable).

* * *

Course Policies and Policies of the University of Texas**University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Documented Disability Statement

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice), 232-2937 (video phone), or consult their website at <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/index.php>.

Use of Blackboard in Class

- In this class we use Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to receive assignments.
- You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8AM to 5PM, so plan accordingly.

Feedback

- During this course we will be asking you to give us feedback on your learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how our teaching strategies are helping or hindering your learning.
- It's very important for us to know your reaction to what we're doing in class, so we encourage you to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together we can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

- Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements.
- You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—we recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical.
- You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Use of Electronic Devices During Class Sessions

- Classroom Laptop use is allowed for taking notes related to this course only. Laptop activities unrelated to this course will lead to dismissal from the class session (and marked as an absence for that day). This includes, but is not limited to: Facebook, email, or any internet use. Wireless must be turned off. *Repeat offenders will result in a filing of a report of academic problem.*
- Other Electronic Devices (Cell phone, Blackberry, I-Phone, etc.) must also be turned off and put away during class. Any use of these devices, including texting, web surfing, etc. will lead to dismissal from class session (and marked as an absence for that day). *Repeat offenders will result in a filing of a report of academic problems.*

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify us of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, we will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

- If you are worried about someone who is acting unusually, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior.
- This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Syllabus

The instructors reserve the right to make changes to the course syllabus.