

MINGEL SEWMA

Teaching Portfolio

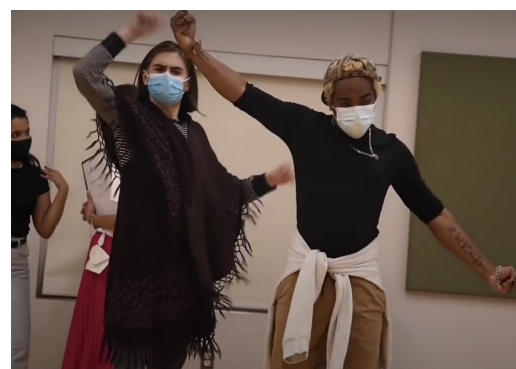


TABLE OF CONTENTS

—	BIOGRAPHY & CONTACT - PG 1
—	CURRICULUM VITAE - PG 2
—	TEACHING PHILOSOPHY - PG 10
—	COURSE CATALOG - PG 14
—	COURSE DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH, & COURSE MATERIAL - PG 22
—	DIRECTING COURSE DEVELOPMENT - PG 27
—	DIRECTING SYLLABUS - PG 34
—	DIRECTING LAB ASSIGNMENT - PG 43
—	SCRIPT ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT - PG 50
—	EVALUTATION & REVIEWS - PG 54
—	SELF APPRAISAL AY 21/22 - PG 55

TABLE OF CONTENTS cont'd.

—	CHAIR EVALUATION AY 21/22 - PG 57
—	STUDENT EVALUATIONS - PG 60
—	WORKSHOPS AND PROGRAMMING - PG 68
—	WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT PROGRAMMING - PG 69
—	HISTORICAL CONSTRAINTS FOR SPECULATIVE FUTURES - PG 73
—	EDI TRAINING FOR SEASON SELECTION - PG 77



CONTACT



240-353-9607



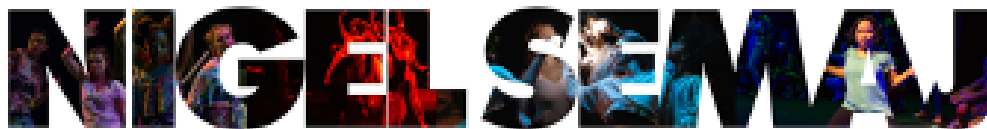
nigelsemajdirecting@gmail.com
www.nigelsemaj.com

BIOGRAPHY

NIGEL SEMAJ. (they/them/theirs) is a director, movement director, choreographer, and educator from Washington, D.C. Notable directing credits include: Ntozake Shange's *Spell No. 7*, Paula Vogel's *The Baltimore Waltz*, as well as new works such as *Black Hollow*, by Aeneas Sagar Hemphill, and "wolfchildren runslowly through a Bruegel landscape," 1558 by Ruth Tang. Their 2015 production of *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide when the Rainbow is Enuf* won them awards in Excellence of Direction, Excellence in Ensemble Work, and Excellence in Costume Design. Their adaptation work includes a five-female adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* entitled *10,000 Moor*, "For Hylas," a queer retelling of the Hercules myth, and *Call Me By Any Other Name...Just As Sweet*: a queer deconstruction of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Nigel's movement and choreography have been celebrated alongside Ethan Heard's direction of Marcus Scott's adaptation of Beethoven's *Fidelio* as a NY Times Critic's Pick. Working currently as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Muhlenberg College, Nigel's academic tenure in higher education includes



policy creation/amendment, creating protocols and policies around equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism. Their current scholarly work is in developing anti-racist pedagogies in theatre education, including explorations of anarchist pedagogies and bell hooks' pedagogy of freedom. Nigel's work is deeply rooted in Frantz Fanon's theory on decolonization. It embraces violence as a means of decolonization alongside the belief that theatre is didactic and is a vehicle for change. They are currently working on a classical adaptation play cycle existing within the world of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. When Nigel isn't choosing violence, they are vehemently cooking up a storm in the kitchen and baking cheesecakes for fun!



WWW.NIGELSEMAJ.COM

They/Them/Theirs

NIGELSEMAJDIRECTING@GMAIL.COM • 240.353.9607

EDUCATION

MFA., Theatre, The New School for Drama, 2020

Concentrations: Theatre Directing, New Work Development.

*Thesis: *Spell Number 7* by Ntozake Shange.

B.A, Theatre, Lycoming College, 2017

Majors: Directing and Performance

*Thesis: *The Baltimore Waltz* by Paula Vogel.

Garrett Community College, McHenry MD

Studies: Secondary Education and Fine and Performing Arts

TEACHING/INSTRUCTING EXPERIENCE

(Syllabi/lesson plans available upon request)

Muhlenberg College. Allentown, PA

Visiting Assistant Professor

Process in Production: Directors Lab (*Two Sections*)

Process in Production: Staging and Composition

Dramatic Text in Action

Histories of Queer Performance

Dana Scholars Independent Project Study

Professional Development for Theatre Artists

Student Summer Research Grant (Dance/Movement)

Process in Production: Directors Lab (*Two Sections*)

Movement for The Actor (Performance & Movement)

Audition Workshop: Classical Performance (Guest)

Process in Production: Directors Lab (*Two Sections*)

Collaborative Process: Director's Project (Co-Lab)

Present

Fall 2021

Spring 2022

Spring 2022

Spring 2022

Spring 2022

Summer 2022

Summer 2022

Fall 2022

Fall 2022

Fall 2022

Spring 2023

Spring 2023

Lycoming College. Williamsport, PA

Visiting Guest Artist/Director

dismantled: reading series

January 2021 - March 2021

Long Island University. LI, NY***Adjunct Professor***

Intro to Drama (First Year Theatre Majors)

Directing I

Directing I

Directing Independent Study

Script Analysis Independent Study

First Year Acting Production Lab

September 2020 – May 2021

Fall 2020

Fall 2020

Spring 2021

Spring 2021

Spring 2021

Spring 2021

The New School. New York, NY***Co-Instructor***

Dance for Actors (Graduate Level)

August 2018 – January 2020

Fall 2020

Lycoming College. Williamsport, PA***Teaching Assistant***

Acting II

Acting I and Directing I

Intro to Dance

August 2015-May 2017

Spring 2017

Fall 2016

Fall 2015

EDUCATION PROGRAM WORK EXPERIENCE**Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA***Race and Power Curriculum Requirement Committee**Muhlenberg Center for Teaching and Learning Advisory Board**Anti-Racism Action Plan Committee Member**Dance Program Hiring Search Panel**Past (Fall 2021)**Present**Present**Summer 2022***Long Island University, LI, NY***Administrative Assistant to Dean of Performing Arts**Season Selection Committee**September 2020 - May 2021***Plato Learning, New York, NY***Afterschool Director**Camp Story Director**November 2017 - May 2018**February 2018 - August 2019***The New School, New York, NY***Cultural Change Task Force Committee**Affinity Group Facilitator/Co-Coordinator**Sex Positive Health Advocate**April 2019 – May 2020**August 2018 – May 2020**Aug. 2017 – October 2018*

Lycoming College, Williamsport, PA

Title IX Conduct Panel, Office of Student Life
Residential Life Hiring Panel, Department of Res. Life
Resident Assistant, Department of Residential Life
Conference Assistant, Department of Residential Life
Summer Orientation Leader, Department of Student Life

August 2015 – May 2017
Summer of 2016
December 2013-May 2016
May 2015 – August 2015
June, 2014 and 2015

Garrett College, McHenry, MD

Resident Assistant, Office of Residence Life
Summer Resident Assistant, Office of Residence Life
Summer Orientation Leader

October 2011-May 2013
May 2012 – August 2012
May 2012- June 2012

CURRICULUM AND PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT INVOLVEMENT

LINK TO DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Pedagogical Development Grant Project ***Muhlenberg College - Summer/Fall 2022***

Anti-Racist Action Plan Assessment Committee ***Muhlenberg College - In Process with Committee.***

Rehearsal Protocols: An In-Depth Document Outlining Expectations and Best Practices for Varying Rehearsals at The New School, **Creation 2018 – In Effect January of 2020**

Slurs Protocol: How Slurs are Used/Understood in Rehearsal Spaces, The New School, **Creation 2019 – In Effect: Ant. August 2020**

Hair and Makeup Protocols: A Guide for The Design and Handling of Students Hair (primary Students of Color). The New School, **Creation 2019 – In Effect: Ant. August 2020**

Cultural Change New Student Orientation: A Presentation For Incoming Students at The News School. **Developed and Executed in 2019 for the 2019/2020 School Year.**

DIRECTING EXPERIENCE

*indicates new play development

Director	<i>We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, formerly Known as Southwest Africa, from the German Sudwestafrika between the Years 1884-1915</i>	Muhlenberg College, 2022
Director/Adaptor	<i>Call Me By Any Other Name (Just As Sweet) A Queer Deconstruction of Shakespeare's R+J</i>	Muhlenberg College, 2021
Director/Choreographer	*Come What May (First Year Showcase)	LIU POST, 2021
Co-Director	* <i>Voices from a Pandemic</i>	Notch Theatre Co, 2021
Director/Choreographer	<i>Spell No. 7</i>	The New School, 2020
Director	Be Reasonable (Short Film)	The New School, 2020
Associate Director	La Boheme	Mannes Opera, 2020
Director/Choreographer	*"For Hylas; a playlist"	The New School, 2019
Director	<i>a curious thing: or superheroes k'aint fly</i>	AADA, 2019
Director	<i>wolfchildren runslowly through a bruegel landscape, 1559</i>	The New School, 2019
Director/Adaptor	<i>10,000 Moor (An Adaptation of Titus Andronicus)</i>	The New School, 2019
Director	<i>Black Hollow</i>	Argo Collective, 2018
Director	<i>Argonautika</i>	Argo Collective, 2018
Director	<i>448 Psychosis</i>	The New School, 2018
Director	<i>Hell Is Normal</i>	The New School, 2017
Asst. Director	<i>Blood Wedding</i>	The New School, 2017
Director	<i>columbinus</i>	Lycoming College, 2017
Director/Choreographer	<i>The Baltimore Waltz</i>	Lycoming College, 2016
Director/Choreographer	<i>For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf</i>	Lycoming College, 2015

STAGED READINGS

Director	<i>*Someone Else's Bullet</i>	The Civilians, 2022
Director	<i>*Lyon's Den</i>	Lycoming College, 2021
Director	<i>*a case for Black girls setting central park on fire</i>	Lycoming College, 2021
Director	<i>*Collective Empathy Formation</i>	Lycoming College, 2021
Director	<i>*"The Good Cop"</i>	Conch Shell Productions

MOVEMENT SKILLS/TRAINING

Methodologies: Choreopoem Movement/Dance, Masque – Commedia Dell'Arte, Action Through Analysis (Chekov/Dimitri Krymov), Laban Analysis

Movement Training: Frantic Assembly, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Tectonic Theatre Company, Parkour

Dance Training: Hip-Hop (Intermediate), Contemporary (Advanced), Ballet (Basic), Jazz and Musical Theatre (Advanced), Tap(Intermediate) Vogue

SAFD Certifications: Unarmed, Small Sword, Knife, Rapier & Dagger, Quarterstaff

Additional Weapons: Broadsword (Beginner) Fencing (Competitive Training)
Foam/Boffer/LARPing Weapons (Advanced) Knife Throwing
(Intermediate) Archery (Skilled), Riflery (Advanced)

SELECT CHOREOGRAPHY

Choreographer	<i>Agamemnon</i>	Columbia University, 2022
Movement Director	<i>Fidelio</i>	Heartbeat Opera, 2022
Fight Director	Not Him - Horror Short Film	PCB Media Group, 2021
Fight Director	Minding My Business - Short Film	The New School, 2021
Fight Director	<i>As You Like It</i>	The New School, 2019
Fight Choreographer	Be A Man – Short Film	PCB Media Group, 2019
Movement Coach	<i>Hal</i>	The New School, 2019
Choreographer	<i>Ah Sweeter Lyme</i>	The New School, 2018
Assistant Choreographer	<i>Passing Strange</i>	Wilma Theater, 2018

WORKSHOPS, LECTURES, & PROGRAMS

*slides and materials available upon request

Towards An Antiracist Curriculum - HowTo Decolonize The Creative Classroom.

Muhlenberg College, 2022

How do we begin to decolonize the creative process in the classroom? How do we begin to dismantle the top down structure of educating in our creative classrooms? In this day event, creative faculty will participate in panel discussions and workshops on how to embed antiracism into their coursework and individual pedagogies.

Historical Constraints for Speculative Futures. Muhlenberg College, 2022

How are the futures we can imagine constrained, produced, and shaped by history/histories? In *We Are Proud to Present*, we are presented with two different forms of discrimination and racial violence from different times and places. And yet, these two moments have real resonances and interconnections: examining the genocide of the Herero through the lens of racism, slavery, and the lynching of Black bodies in the American South, the actors find themselves haunted by traces of the past. What resources do these legacies of violence offer us for imagining a more liberated future?

Sedehi Project Dialogues. Muhlenberg College, 2022

Utilizing the production of *We Are Proud to Present* by Jackie Sibbles Drury, SDP Facilitators will lead group discussions on the governing question: “How do we become more ethical collaborators?” First, the SDP Dialogues will closely examine the differences in how the characters within the play navigate challenging material and difficult conversations. Then, groups will think critically on and discuss how their own identities & experiences influence how they navigate conversations surrounding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism.

The Power of Art: How Artists Influence Social Justice. Muhlenberg College, 2022

Spanish Painter and artist, Pablo Picasso stated: “Painting is not made to decorate apartments. It's an offensive and defensive weapon against the enemy.”

Using creative and artistic expression to bring about awareness, cultural shifts, and social change spans various disciplines such as visual art, theatre, dance, photography, film, music, poetry, and more. Artists can begin to shift and change the world when we use art as a means for social change. How do we do this? And what are our responsibilities as artists? Is it our responsibility?

Adaptation as Means of Decolonization. Long Island University Brooklyn, 2021

For Frantz Fanon the process of decolonization is an act of violence that aims to create. Create new “men” - new languages and new humanities. It is a mental process. In order to liberate ourselves we must find an outlet through which the forces accumulated by the colonizers' aggression can be released. During this workshop we will explore What it means to take traditional western American theatre and place BIPOC, queer and bodies within the Global Majority into them using an understanding of decolonization, combat breath, and more of Fanon's work.

Staging and Composition. Muhlenberg College, 2021

Using the scenic design of *Call Me By Any Other Name...Just As Sweet: A Queer Deconstruction of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* this workshop is for young directors to explore staging and composition by learning how to use Components/Tools of Dynamic Composition such as: shape, levels, depth, focus, balance, framing and more.

How Her Story Is *Your* Story. Lycoming College 2021

This workshop aims to discuss the history of the stereotypes of Black women in Theatre, Film and Television. Participants will explore these stereotypes, recognize their biases both conscious and subconscious, and discuss how we as a society can better uplift, support, love, and protect Black women today.

Let's Talk About Race: Hard Conversations About Race, Systemic Oppression, Inequality, and What We Can Do to Achieve Liberation. Lycoming College, 2021

This workshop will center around how to have difficult conversations on race in America. How do we have empathy for one another? How do we begin to have real conversations that propel us forward rather than hold us back.?

Dismantling the Master's Playhouse. Lycoming College, 2021

In an introduction to the power of inclusive storytelling we will delve into the understanding of Audre Lorde's text “The Master's Tools” to examine ways in which we can begin to dismantle old institutions and the systems of oppression that plague the world today.

Gender, Sex, And Sexuality: Cultural Change Workshop, The New School, 2019

What is gender, what is sex, and what is sexuality? One thing they have in common is that they have the tendency to be confused for the same thing. In this workshop, students will gain the tools needed to engage in healthy conversations regarding gender, sex and sexuality.

STIS and Stigmas: Sex Positive Collective Training, The New School, 2018

How do we talk about/educate ourselves and others about STD's in a way that encourages behaviors that make the spread of disease less likely but also destigmatized?

Storytelling with the Body Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, (2016)

During this workshop, we will learn about the art of movement in storytelling, the importance of building ensemble through movement, body communication and self-awareness. Through these objectives, we will learn to develop a strong and flexible body which will ultimately lead to the development of the ability to move through space with ease and interact instinctively with scene partners. Through exploration of the human body paired with an exercise in devised storytelling, we will collectively tell a story through choreographed movement.

01

Teaching

PHILOSOPHY

“For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.”

- Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde’s quote is the basis of my teaching philosophy. I believe in bringing about change; students must be empowered not to reinvent the wheel but rather to imagine a world without the wheel and build something new. As an educator, I play a crucial role as the catalyst for said change. I encourage my students not only to dream of a culturally open environment but to create one from which strong leaders emerge.

As an educator, my research and practice focus heavily on the decolonization of theatre academia, curriculum reconstruction, centering students’ voices, and expanding what we teach in the theatre classroom. The higher education system has long relied on a top-down learning structure. Top-down structures have traditionally forced anyone outside white cis-het standards to conform to that homogeneity. Those standards are detrimental to the mental and emotional well-being of marginalized communities and make progress and learning difficulties in the classroom. To combat that specific conformity and homogeneity, I construct my courses, policies, guidelines, and practices with various anti-racist and liberatory pedagogies and practices in mind. In using Emergent Strategies, Restorative Practices, Anti-Racist Workshopping, and bell hooks’ Pedagogy of Freedom - to name a few - I teach from an Anti-Racist pedagogical approach. To teach an anti-racist tradition, I believe teachers must do the following to challenge this traditional model of academia.

Teachers must establish an open learning community culture: In my classrooms, I embrace the bell hooks practice of an Open Learning Community, a radical pedagogical approach that recognizes that everyone influences the classroom dynamic. In its simplest terms: everyone contributes. To create an open learning community, I work to dismantle notions of status. To do so, I foster a community where not only do we learn together but also grow together as one and support one another. My students know that while I, as the instructor, am responsible for their education and fostering a safe learning space, they also hold responsibility. Responsibility to their instructor, themselves, and the communal space we build and learn together within. My courses seek to eliminate status so the community may learn together and move from a place of love and care. I work to expand the curriculum and reconstruct teaching and learning to center the student.

To center the student, however, does not mean to decenter the instructor. What it does mean is to share power and remove ego from learning. ***Teachers must decenter the ego.*** One of the core tenants in my course community agreements is “Embrace ignorance and extend grace.” Ignorance is defined as a lack of knowledge. Thus we are all ignorant of something. Students in my courses embrace that definition and work together to extend grace when someone is ignorant of something, creating a safe space where we can all learn free of judgment. No one knows everything; together, we know a lot. My students learn through embracing ignorance to acknowledge mistakes and make amends if necessary. When we embrace this practice of embracing ignorance, we remove ego from the equation. When I, as the instructor, remove ego, I remove the pressures of having to “know it all” from the equation. I teach my students that “I don’t know.” can be and is a correct answer to a question. However, they should never stop there. I encourage my students to have an insatiable curiosity for life and how things are, so if they don’t know something, they should seek out the answer, if not for anyone but themselves.

Teachers must work to “complete the canon” and teach an expansive curriculum. Students in my courses engage with texts outside the traditional western canon. I challenge their definitions of theatre by exploring various modes of textual analysis, engaging in conversations around the meaning of the play, exploring history, culture, and language in our analytical process, and exploring the relationship between spectator and player. In teaching outside the traditionally taught canon, I teach modules on: “Magical Realism, The Home and Family within Latinx Communities,” “Intergenerational Memory and Trauma in AAPI Storytelling,” “Shange and Her Contemporaries,” “The Black Arts Movement and Black Theatre Traditions.” When students learn within a more expansive curriculum, they learn how to expand their ideas of theatre beyond the traditional white American theatre systems.

In my courses, students will encounter a variety of methodologies, including new alternatives such as Black Acting Methodology, different approaches to dramatic structures and script analysis for plays of the Global Majority, and Anti Racist workshopping methods. Embracing alternative teaching methods and alternative methods of providing feedback and criticism gives frequent opportunities for growth in the classroom, thus reducing student stress and their need to perfect and please the instructor. ***Teachers need to teach alternative methods.***

Outside of coursework, equitable practices are crucial to students' success. As a student who grew up financially challenged and without access to materials to succeed, I ensure that my resources and accessibility become my students' resources and accessibility when formulating materials and reading lists for coursework. *Teachers must provide access to their students.*

My work does not stop once my students/collaborators and I part. The work I ask my students and o engage with agitates and questions, and sometimes place them in uncomfortable places to show them that the only action they must seek is revolution. They must work not only to shake systems of oppression but dismantle them and build alternatives. One such community guideline in my course is: Dismantling systems of oppression, building alternatives, and cultural change is difficult but also rewarding, necessary, and benefits everyone. Whether my students' activism and assault on oppression begins or continues once they leave my classrooms, I hope that their work, as artists and as people, contributes to collective liberation. Equity, diversity, and inclusion are not the goals but the tools provided to achieve liberation. To that end, *teachers must teach that liberation is possible.*

Liberation is a marathon; it is the removal of systems of oppression, dismantling the master's house, and forging a new community that is accepting of all. Liberation means feminist rights, Black rights, LGBTQIA rights, differently abled rights, and more exist together. Liberation entails freedom, and Freedom is not real if everyone cannot exercise it. Liberation is a collective effort, and theatre is a collaborative art form. Theatre is liberating, and artists can be liberators. I must provide liberation to my students at every chance I get, for they will continue to build the future so that my children, and their children, and so on can experience true liberation . . . whenever that may come.



02

Course Catalog

Courses Taught

COURSE NAME	SEMESTER	CAP/ENR
Intro to Drama (First Year Theatre Majors)	Fall 2020	24/24
Directing I	Fall 2020	12/12
Directing I	Spring 2021	12/12
Directing Independent Study	Spring 2021	NA/1
Script Analysis Independent Study	Spring 2021	12/10
First Year Acting Production Lab	Spring 2021	20/25
Process in Production: Directors Lab	Fall 2021	12/13
Process in Production: Staging and Composition	Spring 2022	12/13
Dramatic Text in Action	Spring 2022	20/23
Histories of Queer Performance	Spring 2022	20/22
Dana Scholars Independent Project Study	Spring 2022	NA/1
Professional Development for Theatre Artists	Summer 2022	10/6
Student Summer Research Grant (Dance/Movement)	Summer 2022	NA/1
Process in Production: Directors Lab	Fall 2022	12/12
Process in Production: Directors Lab	Fall 2022	12/13
Movement for The Actor (Performance & Movement)	Fall 2022	12/6
Audition Workshop: Classical Performance (Guest)	Fall 2022	24/24
Process in Production: Directors Lab	Spring 2023	12/12
Process in Production Directors Lab	Spring 2023	12/12
Collaborative Process: Director's Project (Co-Lab)	Spring 023	18/18

Directing: Process in Production

THR 371:

YEAR: JUNIORS/SENIORS

CAP: 12

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a hands-on course focusing intently and deeply on textual analysis and the director's process during various stages of production. Directors will explore and learn production conceptualization, script analysis, dramatic form, staging & composition, working with/coaching actors, and effective collaboration with production & design teams. Students will participate as directors and actors in mounting several monologues/scenes/ten-minute plays throughout the course. In the pursuit of disrupting and dismantling historical and systemic oppression, Directors will explore texts centering on Black and brown artists, non-traditional structures, and the voices historically left out of white American Theatre in an attempt to discover new ways of working as generative artists in space.

Directing: Staging & Composition

THR 371:

YEAR: JUNIORS/SENIORS

CAP: 12

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an experiential course that explores staging and directorial composition. Directors will work on vision and conceptualization through text analysis to begin composing dynamic stage pictures and theatrical composition.

This course intends for young directors to translate analysis work, research, and concept/vision into their staging and composition work. Directors will explore various fields that use composition from music, drawing & painting, dance, sculpture, and more, and use those tools to develop their directorial style and gestures. Directors will explore various theater types, styles, and genres and will learn how to stage/compose for them.

Collaborative Process

Stage Directors & Choreographers

Lab Project

—| THR

—| YEAR: JUNIORS/SENIORS

—| CAP: 18

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The SDC Lab Project will explore techniques for collaboration between the theater disciplines of adaptation, acting, directing, and choreography. This course centers around a director's or choreographer's vision and is geared towards learning how to collaborate in rehearsal and the specific elements each discipline contributes to developing new work. Using the specific vocabulary and language that each discipline uses, directors/choreographers will begin to develop their unique voices in collaborative spaces to adapt an existing text for theatrical performance. Directors and/or choreographers will propose an adaptation of a classical or existing text to adapt and direct throughout the duration of this course. Following a cohort model, students will work as an ensemble, learning the language of collaboration and devising. Students will explore how to generate text, how to talk to one another during rehearsals, conflict resolution, and professional rehearsal process standards. Directors will learn how to communicate their ideas and work with/coach actors in the rehearsal room. Following the spirit of self-producing, directors will not only adapt and direct but design, produce, and run them all within the studio spaces on campus with a limited budget and minimal resources from the department. Actors in this course will be cast within these new adaptation projects and participate in the devising, producing, and designing side of these as needed per project.

The SDC Lab Project is an engine for creating lasting artistic relationships and giving the artists the language and necessary tools to make a tangible piece of theatre.

The course will focus on developing three projects, culminating in work-in-progress presentations in the studios of Muhlenberg College's theatre and dance department. Our goal is for directors to emerge confident in their work with their respective collaborators.

Directing I

THE 131

YEAR: JUNIORS/SENIORS

CAP: 20

COURSE DESCRIPTION

To introduce students to the art and craft of directing for theatre. This course will focus on the role of the director and their relationship with the play itself. In this course we will focus on text analysis using in depth monologue analysis as well as play analysis. In this course, students will do heavy work on text analysis and preparation. By the end of the semester students will have an understanding on the process of a director and will use what they have learned to direct a chosen monologue or scene from one of the plays have worked on in class.

Directing Project:Independent Study

THR 371:

YEAR: FIRST YEARS

CAP: 20

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The intent of this course is to introduce students to the art and craft of directing for theatre. This course will focus on the role of the director and their relationship with the play itself. In this course we will focus intently and deeply on textual analysis and director's research/dramaturgy focusing on non-traditional structures, BIPOC, queer and feminist theatre and voices traditionally left out of White American Theatre.

Histories of Queer Performance

—| THR 371:

—| YEAR: JUNIORS/SENIORS

—| CAP: 20

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will be an exploration of queerness as it applies to the narratives, storytelling practices, dramatic structures and conventions within Queer performance. This will explore Queer theatre, film, television, animation, music, fashion, and more in an attempt to define queer performance. We will examine the tropes, themes, motifs, ideas, worlds, characters, and structures within queer storytelling and its many intersections. We will discuss how queer bodies move through space and ask what is queer, who is queer, and who can claim queerness. We will examine the various injustices and oppression within the queer community, including racism within queer communities and misogyny and anti-trans and trans exclusion within queer spaces/communities. We will engage with queer trauma, queer joy, and everything in between. We will discuss the history of queer art and the forgotten trailblazers who would not have the queer present without it. We will discuss in detail how we work for a more liberatory world and how to define what a queer future looks like for us with the hopes of pursuing and creating that queer future.

Dramatic Text in Action

—| THR 371:

—| YEAR: FIRST YEARS

—| CAP: 20

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Dramatic Text in Action focuses on the specific historical category of drama and its way of thinking and producing meaning. This course teaches methods of textual analysis that specifically align with the tasks of theatre scholars and interpretive artists as opposed to a literary studies paradigm. The essential perspective is seeing plays as structures of actions that create and embody meaning and thinking about how to show the event of the play through compositional practice. Students will develop skills in locating and naming actions and events. They will practice dramaturgical investigation, visualization, and textual and contextual analysis across various dramatic moments and styles.

Introduction to Drama: Script Analysis

THE 101

YEAR: FIRST YEARS

CAP: 20

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course seeks to expand and perhaps disrupt traditional theatre academia and its traditional introduction to theatre. In this course students will be asked to engage with play texts both western, as well as plays that challenge and disrupt western theatre traditions.

This course will not only serve as an introduction to textual and performance analysis, but during our time together students will be asked to engage with culture, communication, ritual, world, language and more in order to be able to analyze and understand texts beyond what Aristotle's Poetics may have taught us.

This course aims to decentralize and decolonize dramatic structure. Students will learn to engage and understand various dramatic structures. Students will grapple with the word "theater" itself, its lineage, and the various branches it contains. Students will engage with plays by Ntozake Shange, Amiri Baraka, Paula Vogel, Jackie Sibblies Drury, Bertolt Brecht, Sophocles, George C. Wolfe, Naomi Iizuka, Julia Cho, Mfoniso Udofia, William Shakespeare, Adrienne Kennedy, Brandon Jacob-Jenkins, Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson, and more.

Students will engage with readings by, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka, Ntozake Shange, Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Aristotle, and more.

Script Analysis Project

INDEPENDENT STUDY

YEAR: JUNIORS/SENIORS

CAP: 12

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will be an exploration of queerness as it applies to the narratives, storytelling practices, dramatic structures and conventions within Queer performance. This will explore Queer theatre, film, television, animation, music, fashion, and more in an attempt to define queer performance. We will examine the tropes, themes, motifs, ideas, worlds, characters, and structures within queer storytelling and its many intersections. We will discuss how queer bodies move through space and ask what is queer, who is queer, and who can claim queerness. We will examine the various injustices and oppression within the queer community, including racism within queer communities and misogyny and anti-trans and trans exclusion within queer spaces/communities. We will engage with queer trauma, queer joy, and everything in between. We will discuss the history of queer art and the forgotten trailblazers who would not have the queer present without it. We will discuss in detail how we work for a more liberatory world and how to define what a queer future looks like for us with the hopes of pursuing and creating that queer future.

Dana Scholars: Directed Studies

—| DNA-975 SCHOLARS INDEPENDENT STUDY

—| YEAR: SENIOR

—| CAP: 1

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will develop their Dana Scholars Directed Study with a faculty member of their choice. Students are encouraged to develop projects that emphasize creativity or original thought rather than producing summaries of previous work. Dana Scholars Directed Studies can take any form as long as it is agreeable to the student and the mentoring faculty member. The Study may culminate in a paper, performance, presentation, or any other final product deemed appropriate. Open only to Dana Scholars.

This project focused on Rupaul's Drag Race and the question if reality television can be truly equity, diverse and inclusive of varying identities.

Professional Development & Branding for Theatre Artists

—| SUMMER DEEP DIVE COURSE

—| YEAR: SENIORS/ALUM

—| CAP: 1

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is geared towards professional development skills and branding for theatre artists. Participants will engage in discussions on professional development and how to market and brand themselves as uniquely different theatre artists. Each week we will discuss a different topic and participants will edit or create materials such as resumes, headshots, sample cover letters, etc. The culminating project will be the development of a portfolio or website. Participants can expect to leave with a portfolio of materials and connections, making them ready to begin marketing themselves in various professional spaces.

Movement For The Actor

—| THR 155

—| YEAR: FIRST YEARS

—| CAP: 12

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for actors of all levels and is intended to help actors build a tension-free, resilient, expressive, present physical instrument. Presence, space, play, shape, energy, relationship, strength, release, breath these are all essential elements of the actor's process that reside in and radiate from the body. We will explore these elements as an ensemble and create both ensemble and individual pieces that utilize these elements as tools of storytelling. Along the way, we will build awareness of individual actor tensions and habits and explore ways to balance and organize the body. Exercises will be drawn from Frantic Assembly, Ruth Zaporah, Viola Spolin, Annie Loui, Viewpoints, yoga, contact improv, Rudolf Laban, and more. No prior movement or dance experience is required. This course is open to all bodies of all abilities.

Student Summer Research Grant: Dance & Movement

—| SUMMER GRANT RESEARCH - IND STUDY

—| YEAR: SENIORS

—| CAP: 1

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course helps students apply and integrate skills and knowledge from previous dance courses they have taken. The course emphasizes research methodology, critical thinking, creativity, writing, and presentation skills. Faculty and students work together to develop appropriate research projects and venues for presentation based upon area of dance major concentration.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH & COURSE MATERIALS

My research and practice focus heavily on the decolonization of theatre academia, curriculum reconstruction, centering students' voices, and expanding what we teach in the theatre classroom. My recent Pedagogical Development Grant funded my research of various anti-racist and liberatory pedagogies and practices, such as Restorative Practices, Anti-Racist Workshopping, and bell hooks Pedagogy of Freedom and how they can be used to expand curriculum and reconstruct teaching and learning to center the student. The culmination of this grant project resulted in three revised courses and new course materials, workbooks, and chapters generated for each course. As an educator, I focus heavily on the decolonizing of the creative classroom As inspired by Felicia Rose Chavez and her book *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop*, I hope to find alternatives to the top-down structures that plague creative arts education. Top-down structures have traditionally forced anyone outside white cis-het standards to conform to that homogeneity. Those standards are detrimental to the mental and emotional well-being of marginalized communities and make progress and learning difficulties in the classroom. To combat that specific conformity and homogeneity, I construct my courses, policies, guidelines, and practices with various anti-racist and liberatory pedagogies and practices in mind. In using Emergent Strategies, Restorative Practices, Anti-Racist Workshopping, and bell hooks' Pedagogy of Freedom - to name a few - I teach from an Anti-Racist pedagogical approach.

Grant Report_N.Semaj
MCTL Pedagogical Development

Decolonizing the Creative Classroom

Muhlenberg College
MCTL Pedagogical Development Grant Report
AY 22/23

Award Year: June - August 2022
Award Amount: \$4,000
Implementation Year: AY 22/23 (Fall-August to December 22)
Grant Recipient: Nigel Semaj Barnes

Nigel Semaj (they/them)
Visiting Assistant Professor in Theatre
129 N 10th, Street. Apt 2. Allentown PA, 18102
nigelsemaj@muhlenberg.edu
nigelsemaj.com

I. Thanks and Recognition

This grant project and course revisions would not have been possible without the support of Mark Scuitto, the 21/22 AY MCTL advisory board members, and provost Laura Furge. Additionally, I would like to extend my thanks to the students of my THR 371 Process in Production course from the Fall of 21 and Spring of 22 for providing me with the feedback necessary to revise this course.

Further thanks to Robyn Watson for her unwavering support and my partner Liam Browne.

II. Challenges and Governing Questions:

In my initial proposal, I posed the following questions:

Challenge 1: How do we, as creative educators decolonize our pedagogical practices in the creative classroom?

Challenge 2: How do we decenter ego and authority and share power with our students?

Challenge 3: How can we provide students with the tools/materials they need for maximum success from the start?

My research this summer provided me both with answers and even more questions. The purpose of pursuing this work was to examine best practices in the creative classroom, the current curriculum of my THR 371 course, and the theatre program and to develop decolonized educational learning goals, objectives, and materials. I am proud to say that not only were the challenges met and questions answered, but I successfully created new academic tools for students, a revision of THR 371, and new expansive learning materials for students.

III. Goals for Pedagogical Approach

One of my goals this summer was to closely examine my pedagogical approaches and expand so that they could exist within an equitable container. This research brought me to familiar places. By examining the works of bell hooks, Ghouldy Muhammad, Audre Lorde, Franz Fanon, and more, I was able to meet the following goals and expand my understanding of curriculum and have it meet and be influenced/shaped by my social justice practices. My goals were to

1. Assess and challenge hidden biases within my own pedagogical approaches & current departmental curriculum.
2. Develop inclusive reading lists featuring the works of BIPOC, queer, and new

Grant Report_N.Semaj
MCTL Pedagogical Development

playwrights.

3. Reconstruct/revise THR 371 - Process in Production.
4. Generate new course projects/assignments to challenge & assist in developing young directors' unique artistic styles and authorial voices.
5. Design anti-racist workshopping methods and culturally responsive curriculum strategies for creative learning spaces
6. Implement Open Learning Community methods, Emergent Strategies, Restorative Justice practices, and Education as The Practice of Freedom within the creative classroom.

These pedagogical approaches build students up, give them authority over their education, and give power to their unique voices. Within these approaches, students become better learners, their communication skills develop exponentially, and they become better members of the greater community.

IV. Curriculum Design/Development

What is the purpose of a curriculum? What is curriculum? If there is something I learned from my pre-research on this project is that the definition of words matters.

I began with the Theatre Program's curriculum map. At first glance, it was confusing to read. At a closer glance, I began to understand the paths offered but was unsure exactly what the curriculum's purpose was or how the core values/principles of the theatre program were reflected within the curriculum. Shouldn't your curriculum speak directly to those core values and principles? Shouldn't your curriculum have clear outcomes and systems of measurement for those outcomes?

I was looking to assess the curriculum not only to develop my course curriculum but to examine how it fits into the overall picture/experience of the Muhlenberg Theatre Program curriculum. To assess the current curriculum (which is new, starting with the class of 2024), I examined and assessed the current values and goals of the theatre program. Additionally, I researched and analyzed various standards of theatre education in higher education from various colleges and institutions. Much like slavery and racism, American theatre was built on European models. Not to mention the countless forms of storytelling stolen from African, Black, and Indigenous peoples/communities.

If the theatre institution was built (much like the rest of America) on the backs of Black folks and bones of Indigenous peoples, then what does that mean for the American theatre institution? In theatre education programs today, you will find the study of methods such as Grotowski, Stanislavsky, Strasberg, Shakespeare, Meisner, Chekov, Uta Hagen, Stella Adler, Anne Bogart's Viewpoints, Laban Analysis, and more.

The above are placed on pedestals as the way to perfection in performance. These methods/styles do not include the style of performance required in an August Wilson

play, nor a piece by Ntozake Shange, Amira Baraka, and other marginalized theatre makers. These practices were created for specific people in mind. White people. White populations. Who at one point were all that were allowed to do theatre. This framework of “The White Masters” has evolved in that we place celebrities/actors and actresses on pedestals for their work, i.e., Meryl Streep, Marlon Brando, Robert De Niro, and Tom Hanks. Even in your search for great actors in the world, the predominant names that appear are that of white men.

Examining, assessing, and overhauling a curriculum is a process that requires major unlearning. It requires you to look into the historical reasons behind the Great White Way (Broadway) construction and the history of The American Theatre. The curriculum is based on culture and contributes to the world’s advancement of society and culture. We have seen its negative reflections on our nation, as for a huge portion of time, education belonged to the White man.

This work and thought process reminds me of Audre Lourde’s titular work “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master’s House,” in which she analyzes historical and capitalist systems of oppression and says that they cannot be dismantled using the tools of the oppressor.

One of my challenges was: “How do we decolonize the creative classroom?” I wonder if the answer starts with decolonizing and deconstructing historical and oppressive curriculums. However, how do we do that work? My research may have left me with more questions than when I began regarding curriculum development. Which is great! Artists love questions because they are filled with possibility.

- I. What is the process of decolonizing curriculum?
- II. How do we begin to achieve equitable curriculum development?
- III. Should curriculum be a fixed thing? Does that mean the curriculum becomes obsolete when it is written and solidified?
- IV. How do we expand our understanding of curriculum to work on a spectrum, to be all welcoming and flexible?
- V. How does the curriculum help set students up for success in their first year?
- VI. How do we honor and lead expectations as leaders of creative classrooms?
- VII. How do we, as leaders of creative classrooms, set clear learning objectives year by year and class by class?
- VIII. What are we in the theatre program preparing theatre students for when they graduate?
- IX. What would a directing curriculum look like?

These questions led me to the exploration of various curriculum design processes. The one that ran the most vital to my work was Backwards Design. It reminded me of the textbook on Script Analysis by David Ball; “Backwards and Forward: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays.” In his book, Ball teaches how to read a play and perform script analysis, but in it, he stresses the importance of doing the work backward first. Identify where you are going before determining what you need to go there. This method

Course Development

Grant Report_N.Semaj
MCTL Pedagogical Development

V. THR 371: Process in Production

When I stepped into my position as VAP for Theatre, I inherited THR 37 from Charlie Richter. This grant was not only to develop my pedagogical approaches but also to revise the course to fit into the container of my specific expertise and experience.

THR 371 COURSE INFORMATION (PRE-GRANT)

GRADING BASIS: Audit, Graded, Pass/Fail

UNITS: 1 Units

COURSE DESCRIPTION: “This is an experiential course that explores the process of bringing the play text to the stage. Working as an ensemble of actors and directors, the class will confront the challenges of production conceptualization, text analysis, problems in physical staging, and collaborative process. Each student will participate as a director and actor in the mounting of several one-act plays in the course of the semester. Members of the class will also produce two production prompt books based on their work as directors.”

ELIGIBILITY: “Student has completed any of the following course(s): ENG 207 - Introduction to Playwriting, THR 219 - Creativity & Collaboration, THR 220 - Stage Management I, THR 250 - Acting Process, or permission of instructor.”

INSTRUCTIONAL FORMATS: Studio

DELIVERY MODE: In-Person

CAPACITY: 12

MEETING PATTERNS: T/TH -110 Minutes - Trexler Pavilion Rehearsal Hall

At first glance, Richter’s description read as a problem-based course on how to confront challenges and problems. However, as a director, how can students begin to confront them if they don’t know specific directing concepts? My work in revision led me to focus on the process component of directing. This course needed to provide tools for directing, introduce them to directing concepts, and focus on the director’s process more than anything. You can’t teach all of directing in one course, nor can you solve all the challenges you will encounter in directing. THR 371: Process in Production was revised to introduce directors to textual and story analysis so that they can:

- Work with/coach actors during the rehearsal process
- Generate directorial concepts
- Collaborate with artists/designers/production teams
- Generate physical staging/composition
- Find and develop their authorial voices and distinct directing styles/choices

Grant Report_N.Semaj
MCTL Pedagogical Development

THR 306: Process in Production was first offered in Spring of 2004, with a capacity of 10 students. It was offered once more as THR 306 in the Spring of 2005. Starting in the Spring of 2006, THR 371: Directing: Process in Production was offered.

Using my research on curriculum design, course mapping, Historically Responsive Learning pedagogies, and various curriculum and pedagogical approaches. I developed a course map to map out the course. I examined and assessed the theatre program's curriculum and anti-racist action plan to create a new curriculum for the course. It became clear during my research of those two things that to create an inclusive, equity-driven, anti-racist and restorative course; they must be embedded into the curriculum.

In my work on the course map, I assessed what my previous course contained. I began with consolidating my learning goals - admittedly, there were too many, and they were general and vague. I needed to work to make these new learning goals specific.

Previous learning goals were:

- Directors will develop the ability to understand the works of artists outside of traditional white American theatre.
- Directors will learn how to use text analysis as means for working with actors.
- Directors will hone their ability to effectively communicate with actors during rehearsals.
- Directors will learn how to construct a vision/concept for productions.
- Directors will familiarize themselves with working directors and their work.
- Directors will learn to create meaningful performances with the use scholarly analytical work.
- Directors will develop their understanding of written texts and of how to prepare to work in rehearsal and production.
- Directors will develop the ability to place work in the context of culture and society.
- Directors will learn to use sources outside of the theatre world to analyze theatrical texts.
- Directors will hone their understanding of theatrical composition.
- Directors will develop their ability to formulate their own views/opinions and discuss theatre performance and texts respectfully.
- Directors will develop their own authorial voice in the rehearsal room and will begin to unearth their own personal directing styles.

Grant Report_N.Semaj
MCTL Pedagogical Development

Before the Fall ended, I sent out two surveys. One to my THR 371 courses from the AY 21/22 year and to my students enrolled in my Fall 22 sections. I used this feedback to discern keywords to associate with learning goals. These, accompanied by some keywords I had already identified prior, became the following categories of focus:

- Communication w/Actors
- Concept Development and Articulation
- History of Directing
- Production Work/Management
- Script Analysis
- Staging/Composition
- Voice/Style

I took these and consolidated the previous twelve learning goals into five new distinct, specific and detailed learning objectives.

1. Directors will engage with various modes of performance and theatrical texts, including but not limited to new play development and the works of artists outside of traditional white American theatre.
2. Directors will hone their skills and understanding of textual analysis and storytelling conventions to 1. effectively communicate with/coach actors, 2. communicate/collaborate with various production team members, including designers, and 3. translate their script analysis into effective and dynamic staging and composition.
3. Directors will learn the roles and responsibilities of directing to discover their unique styles and develop their voices to provide well-articulated respectful critiques on theatrical productions, situate themselves and their identities into theatrical texts and provide feedback to their peers.
4. Directors will learn to create meaningful performances that will: 1. speak to socio-political and economic status, 2. challenge societal norms, 3. disrupt and dismantle White supremacy and other systems of oppression.
5. Directors will develop their understanding of script analysis and storytelling conventions, including but not limited to: placing work in context with culture and society, utilizing non-theatrical texts in their analysis, exploring dramatic form, understanding language, identifying pacing, creative world-building, and other forms of directorial analysis.

The reconstruction/revising of THR 371 places analytical work and how to use that to direct actors in a rehearsal environment at the forefront of student learning. Using Anti-Racist workshop methods, I continued to develop my Directing Labs. During these

labs, young directors, rather than presenting a complete scene, directors are observed utilizing their analyses to rehearse with actors during class time.

The challenge was to figure out how often these labs would occur, given the time constraints and number of students. After looking closely at the survey from my incoming THR 371 students, they gave me a challenge. They were looking to direct eight times during this course. EIGHT? How was I going to make that a reality?

This challenge led me to include assisting directing as a skill in the course. Placing myself at the center for review and critique. Before workshoping their scenes, directors would observe me in the classroom and assist in the direction of scenes.

REVISED DIRECTORS LAB:

Director's Lab Workshop is a model of workshoping to observe you as directors in the rehearsal room. This workshop model gives maximum feedback on your practical work with actors and analytical skills. In these workshops, you will be observed on how you bring what you have learned in class into the rehearsal room, how you organize your rehearsal time, and how you challenge yourself.

This directing course is titled Process in Production. The workshops you engage in will focus primarily on your work process. You will engage in three different workshops.

- I. ***Monologue***
The first workshop will consist of a monologue wherein you will focus on a section/monologue from the selected plays.
- II. ***A Scene***
In this workshop, directors will select a scene to analyze and direct.
- III. ***Presentation***
In this lab, you will present a fully staged presentation of your previously workshoped monologue or scene.

Directors will have the option of the following plays to choose their monologues and scenes from:

Everybody by Brandon Jacob Jenkins
Black Hollow by Aeneas Sagar Hemphill
The Last Days of Judas Iscariot by Stephen Adley Guirgis
Metamorphoses by Mary Zimmerman
Language of Angels by Naomi Iizuka
The Normal Heart by Larry Kramer

A maximum of three directors per play will be allowed. When selecting plays, directors

Grant Report_N.Semaj
MCTL Pedagogical Development

should note their top three choices.

Director's Lab Instructor Workshop

You will learn to “assist” hands-on in the room with the instructor in these workshops. There will be three specific Director Labs where the instructor will work as the primary director in the room. You and your directing team will work together to assist.

For the workshop, you will receive:

- Script (Printed)
 - In some cases, you will already have a copy. Bring that prepared with your notes and analysis.
- Writing materials for
 - Rehearsal note-taking
 - Script notation

The Instructor Labs will be:

- I. Tablework Lab - *Come Here, Scrawny* by Emma Horwitz
The director will lead a tablework rehearsal focusing on Character and Language Analysis.
- II. Pacing Workshop - *Come Here, Scrawny* by Emma Horwitz
Putting the play on its feet for the first time, the director will focus on the pacing of Emma Horwitz's *Come Here, Scrawny*.
- III. Monologue Workshop - *For Colored Girls* by Ntozake Shange
The director will lead the first workshop that leads to the director's lab monologues. Using Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls*, the rehearsal will focus on pulling performances out of the actor.
- IV. Composition Lab - *Argonautika* by Mary Zimmerman
Directors will collaborate to create staging and composition for Mary Zimmerman's *Argonautika*.
- V. Scene Workshop - *Come Here, Scrawny* by Emma Horwitz
The director will lead the first workshop that leads to the director's lab scenes. Then, returning to Horwitz's *Come Here, Scrawny*, the director will stage and rehearse the scene on its feet.

In addition to reading the scripts, you should review previous analytical readings and read any supplemental readings. Take note of your findings and tools. Your director (the instructor) will rely on you to assist in the room. Please come prepared.

After the lab, your scripts and rehearsal notes will be gathered and submitted to your instructor for review.

The new framework for Director's Lab:

- I. A pre-workshop meeting where directors communicate their goals and artistic statements
- II. Workshop Rehearsal (IN CLASS)
 - A. Monologues (20-25 Minutes)
 - B. Scenes (30 - 35 Minutes)
- III. A post-workshop meeting where they receive feedback either in class with their peers immediately after their workshop or one-on-one with the instructor. Directors, during this process, select their preferred method of feedback.

Directors, by selecting the same play to choose their labs from will:

1. Limit the amount of work they are asked to do
2. Allows for greater understanding of their selected play so they can direct from a more knowledgeable place.

In Instructor Labs, students will assist me in the direction of the ten-minute play "Come Here, Scrawny", and will utilize "from Eden", "Too Many Sarahs" and other newly written commissioned plays in their analytical work.

THR 371 now culminates in a Ten Minute Play Festival where directors will select and direct a ten-minute play from a list of new plays. These works will allow them to practice their analytical skills in a smaller container.

Young directors, upon graduation, often lack the ability to analyze dramatic texts from a director's point of view. The understanding that the work put on stage is supported by and developed from the analytical work is lost on young directors who want to skip the hard parts and get straight to staging a play.

This summer, my work aimed to introduce young directors to the process of the director and show them the true craft of leading as a director. I was able to shift my understanding of analytical skills to the classroom. The majority of the reading will take place outside of class, but together as an open learning community, we will learn how to apply those skills together in class. I generated new assignments to allow students to develop their voice in the rehearsal room, including Reviewing and Critiquing theatre productions.

When it comes to grading, I removed all punitive measures and behavior, and am exploring having everything open, assignments and all, until the semester closes. Through engaging in restorative and transformative practices, and bell hooks approach to Open Community Learning, I have found the path to giving students power of choice and voice, and power over their learning.

VI. Course Materials

Course Guides contain all materials needed for maximum student success, including lecture notes, scholarly articles, example analytical assignments, project descriptions, course expectations, etc. This summer, I was able to expand my course guides in physical form and also through interactive pdf form.

Through this grant project, my 51-page course guide evolved into a 256-page one, including all the needed information, tools, readings, and resources for maximum student success. The interactive pdf, when accessed using Adobe Acrobat, contains videos and sound files that can be played while students read along with their work

VII. Evaluation Timeline

The following evaluations are the next steps in the evaluation timeline:

October 2022	Midsemester Teacher/Course Evaluation Survey by students.
December 2022	Exit Interviews & Course Evaluations.

VIII. Funds:

Funds were allocated to

A. New Research Texts:

- Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy by Dr. Gholdy Muhammad
- Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds by adrienne maree brown
- Black Acting Methods: Critical Approaches by Sharrell D. Luckett with Tia M. Shaffer
- Ratchetdemic: Reimagining Academic Success by Christopher Emdin
- Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction by Ralph W. Tyler
- Dance We Do by Ntozake Shange

B. Printing Fees for Coursebooks

C. New Scripts for Course

D. New Play Commissions

Directing Syllabus

THR 371 - Directing: Process in Production

Instructor: Nigel Semaj (they/them)

Contact Info: 2403539607

Email: nigelsemaj@muhlenberg.edu

Office Location: Theatre and Dance Office Suite

Class Location: First Floor Rehearsal Hall

Class Hours: T/TH 12:00 - 1:50 pm or 3:00 - 4:50 pm

Student Hours: M/W: 1:00 - 3:00

Or By Appointment via calendly.com/nsemaj

Course Description

This is a hands-on course focusing intently and deeply on textual analysis and the director's process during various stages of production. Directors will explore and learn production conceptualization, script analysis, dramatic form, staging & composition, working with/coaching actors, and effective collaboration with production & design teams. Students will participate as directors and actors in mounting several monologues/scenes/ten-minute plays throughout the course. In the pursuit of disrupting and dismantling historical and systemic oppression, Directors will explore texts centering on Black and brown artists, non-traditional structures, and the voices historically left out of white American Theatre in an attempt to discover new ways of working as generative artists in space.

Course Learning Goals

- I. Directors will engage with various modes of performance and theatrical texts, including but not limited to new play development and the works of artists outside of traditional white American theatre.
- II. Directors will hone their skills and understanding of textual analysis and storytelling conventions to 1. effectively communicate with/coach actors, 2. communicate/collaborate with various production team members, including designers, and 3. translate their script analysis into effective and dynamic staging and composition.
- III. Directors will learn the roles and responsibilities of directing to discover their unique styles and develop their voices to provide well-articulated respectful critiques on theatrical productions, situate themselves and their identities into theatrical texts and provide feedback to their peers.
- IV. Directors will learn to create meaningful performances that will: 1. speak to socio-political and economic status, 2. challenge societal norms, 3. disrupt and dismantle White supremacy and other systems of oppression.
- V. Directors will develop their understanding of script analysis and storytelling conventions, including but not limited to: placing work in context with culture and society, utilizing non-theatrical texts in their analysis, exploring dramatic form, understanding language, identifying pacing, creative world-building, and other forms of directorial analysis.

Assignments & Grading:

Below is the grading scale, assignments, and points each is worth. Directors will receive grading rubrics to understand the point breakdown for each assignment.

POINTS	LETTER GRADE
1,000 - 940	A
899-870	B+
869-840	B
839-800	B-
799-770	C+
769-740	C
739-700	C-
699-599	D
599-0	F

Assignments	TOTAL POINTS
Directors Lunch Discussions (2 at 50 points each)	100
Rehearsal Observations (3 at 25 points each)	75
Module Reflections	25
Play Reviews	50
Analysis Assignments	200
In Class Labs (5 at 20 points each)	100
Director Lab Monologue	75
Director's Lab Scene	100
Director's Lab Final	125
Final Director Analysis	150
TOTAL POINTS	1000

BOOKS USED IN THIS COURSE

- I. Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays by David Ball
- II. The Director's Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre by Katie Mitchell
- III. Staging Story: Five Fundamentals for the Beginning Stage Director
- IV. Lost in Language and Sound by Ntozake Shange

READING LIST FOR THIS COURSE (ARTICLES)

- I. What is Communication
- II. Communication Encyclopedia
- III. E.F.'s Visit to a Small Planet by Elinor Fuchs
- IV. Conflicting Impulses in the Plays of Ntozake Shange
- V. The Revolutionary Theatre by Amiri Baraka
- VI. The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House by Audre Lorde

Students are not required to purchase these books; however, the chapters and information in these sources are invaluable for students actively pursuing directing as a career. PDF copies will be made readily available to students.

PLAYLIST

We Are Proud to Present by Jackie Sibblies Drury
 "Dutchman" by LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka)
The Long Christmas Ride Home by Paula Vogel
For Colored Girls by Ntozake Shange
 "Come Here, Scrawny" by Emma Horwitz
Argonautika by Mary Zimmerman
Everybody by Brandon Jacob Jenkins
Black Hollow by Aeneas Sagar Hemphill
The Last Days of Judas Iscariot by Stephen Adley Guirgis
Metamorphoses by Mary Zimmerman
Language of Angels by Naomi Iizuka
The Normal Heart by Larry Kramer

WATCHLIST

passover directed by Danya Taymor - filmed by Spike Lee
Indecent directed by Rebecca Taichman
 Don't Look Up written and directed by Adam McKay

COURSE OF STUDY AND ASSIGNMENTS

Directors will study the theory and practice of directing and practice its implementation throughout the semester. The assignments listed below will involve considerable reading, research, and writing. During these assignments, directors will research & analyze various scenes, monologues, and plays as assigned by the instructor. Regardless of their intended artistic

focus, directors will learn how to interpret theatrical texts from the director's point of view, engage in conversations with actors, develop a production concept, and successfully execute a fully staged scene.

Rehearsal Observations (75 Points):

Directors must observe three rehearsals, one of which is required to be a technical rehearsal of *We Are Proud to Present*, and submit an observation journal via canvas.

Analysis Assignments (200 Points):

Directors will undergo weekly analytical assignments in the classroom and as homework. In these assignments, directors will demonstrate their understanding of the analytical techniques learned in class.

Directors Lunch Discussions (100 Points):

Students will read and watch two plays to discuss, analyze, and review in class together.

Module Reflection Discussion Boards (25 Points):

Directors will submit their reflections for each module onto a discussion board. Directors are encouraged to respond to each other's reflections and support each other's learning journeys.

Reviewing and Critique Direction/Productions (50 Points):

During this course, students will watch one of the required productions listed in the syllabus and write a one-page review on the piece, critiquing/reviewing the production. While the review should be primarily about the directions, critics should consider production elements, casting, performances, and overall experience.

Directors Labs (400 Points):

I. Tablework Lab (20 Points):

Using *Come Here Scrawny*, Directors will learn what they need to do at the table.

Discussing character, working on language, beats, events, etc. During class, directors will be the professor's assistant directors as they lead the tablework lab.

II. Pacing Lab (20 Points):

Using various scenes, directors will learn the tools and skills to direct dynamic pacing in theatrical texts.

III. Monologue Lab Intro (20 Points)

Directors will assist the instructor in the direction of a monologue.

IV. Monologue Lab (75 Points):

In this lab, directors will direct a monologue in their first on-their-feet rehearsal with an actor in the room. Directors will receive feedback at the end of their workshop day.

- V. Comp Lab (20 Points):
Utilizing a selected text, directors will learn to stage and compose dynamic stage pictures in this lab.
- VI. Scene Lab Intro (20 Points)
Directors will assist the instructor in the direction of a scene on its feet.
- VII. Scene Lab (100 Points):
In this lab, directors will direct a scene on its feet for the second time. Having rehearsed twice prior to their workshop, presenting directors will work to discuss and communicate all previous analytical skills with their actors.
- VIII. Presentation Lab (125 Points):
In this lab, directors will present a fully staged presentation of their previously workshoped monologue or scene. Continuing their work from when they began rehearsals and utilizing new skills and feedback, directors will present their monologue or scene to the class for final feedback and notes.

Final Project: The Ten-Minute Play Festival (150 Points):

Using what they have learned in class, directors will direct, stage, and “design/devise” a ten-minute play. Directors will submit applications/proposals to the instructor for approval. These ten-minute plays will be rehearsed outside of class and fully mounted and performed together in a festival of ten-minute plays.

COURSE POLICIES

Commitment:

This course requires a commitment to yourself and your artistic growth to successfully learn the tools and materials within this class. This course focuses on process, speaking in draft, and applying what you have learned to your week-to-week assignments and activities. This course’s materials, exercises, workshops, assignments, and labs require hard work and dedication. For the work you encounter in this course to challenge your thinking and perception of theatre, you must be committed to yourself and your development for that growth to occur.

Late Assignments:

Turning in assignments is not solely about receiving a grade; they are about getting feedback critical to your course advancement. Late assignments will receive a grade, but their feedback will not be as detailed. Late assignments will affect your ability to do future work on time and turn in detailed analyses, resulting in lower performance in our directing workshops and labs.

Electronics in Class:

Respect for the work of your fellow students is essential. With each year, technology advances further, as well as its use. Using technology in class for class purposes will be allowed. However, violating your peer's respect and work will result in individual removal of these privileges.

Honesty is The Best Policy:

It will become apparent to our learning community if you have not read the plays/assignments for the class. You should plan your schedule to ensure you complete readings in a timely fashion and that you can participate in and contribute to the discussions/labs in class. In the case that you have not done the readings, honesty is the best policy. Please do not waste the time of your community.

Attendance Policy:

Demonstrating commitment to your learning necessitates regular attendance. This course asks for both a physical presence and an emotional and mental one. We cannot move forward as a learning community if your mind and heart are not in it. Directors should be fully present and prepared daily.

However, commitment to yourself necessitates a commitment to your emotional and mental health. Throughout the year, hiccups, failures, and missteps will be inescapable. Take a deep breath and embrace them. If you miss class, will be late, or incapable of being mentally or emotionally present, simply communicate with your instructor.

Policy Violations:

If a director develops a pattern of behavior that violates community agreements or course policies, they will need to schedule a meeting with me to discuss the violation. Should the pattern continue, the next meeting will include the director's academic advisor.

Incompletes:

Because the majority of graded work in this course is based on participation and performance that cannot be completed once the course is over, grades of Incomplete will not be granted.

Required Attendance at On Campus Productions:

Directors are required to attend the following performances on campus this semester:

We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as South West Africa, From the German Südwestafrika, Between the Years 1884 - 1915 -

by Jackie Sibblies Drury

directed by Nigel Semaj

Sept. 29 – Oct. 2, 2022,

The Threepenny Opera

by Bertolt Brecht in collaboration with Elisabeth Hauptmann w/music by Kurt Weill

directed by James Peck

musical director: Vincent Trovato

Oct. 28 – Nov. 6, 2022,

Oedipus — A Staged Reading
by Seneca & adapted by Ted Hughes
directed by Matt Moore
Nov. 11-13, 2022

MTA Studio Productions
November 17 - 20, 2022

She Kills Monsters
by Qui Nguyen
directed by Connor McCully

God of Carnage
by Yasmin Reza,
directed by Joey Marcacci

Tick, Tick...Boom
by Jonathan Larson
directed by Brayden Stallman
music director: Bethan Qian

Open Learning Community Guidelines:

During this course, we will engage in what bell hooks calls an “Open Learning Community,” a radical pedagogical approach recognizing that everyone influences the classroom dynamic. In its simplest terms: everyone contributes. To create an open learning community, we must dismantle our notions of status. We must commit to growing together as one and supporting one another. While your instructor is responsible for your education and fostering a safe learning space, you are all also equally responsible. You are accountable to your instructor, yourself, and the community in which we will build and learn together.

In creating community agreements, we will determine our standards:

- Honors celebrate and embrace diverse identities and intersectionality.
- Creates spaces that allow for a wide variety of expressions, modes of learning, and communication so that individual identities are seen as sources of strength.
- Challenges community members to go beyond their perceived limitations in pursuing artistic and personal growth.
- Breaks down the notion of binary and embraces the world as existing on a spectrum.
- Prioritizes process over production and excellence over perfection.

Our community agreements will fall under the following three major agreements.

Take Care of You, Take Care of Me, Take Care of This Place.

Before we get to our agreements, it is pertinent to note the specific assumptions underpinning the framework and activities of our work together throughout this course.

Community Assumptions:

- I. We are all here because we want and choose to be here.
(*We all have a choice in any situation*)
- II. All systems of oppression exist, and we all benefit from and are harmed by them.

- III. Dismantling systems of oppression, building alternatives, and cultural change is difficult but rewarding, *necessary*, and benefits everyone.
- IV. The body doesn't lie.
- V. Liberation is possible

Community Agreements:

- I. *Be Open and Respectful and prioritize curiosity over mastery.*
Call in, not out/throw sunshine, not shade.
- II. *We Care for Ourselves:*
Stretch, eat, drink, arrive on time, use the restroom, rest, etc.
- III. *One mic and Take Space/Make Space:*
One voice at a time. Further, if you are usually quiet, challenge yourself to take more space, and if you usually talk a lot, be mindful to leave room for quieter voices.
- IV. *Use inclusive & respectful language and appropriate gender pronouns as stated.*
We use inclusive language not because we're politically correct but because it's accurate, fair, respectful, and necessary. Inclusive language simply means language that avoids marginalizing people who are already marginalized. It's a language that is accessible and meaningful to a broad audience.
- V. *Embrace ignorance and extend grace.*
Ignorance is defined as a lack of knowledge. Thus we are all ignorant of something. We shall embrace that and work together to extend grace when someone is ignorant of something and create a safe space where we can all safely learn. No one knows everything; together, we know a lot. *Acknowledge mistakes and make amends if necessary.*
- VI. *F*CK Articulation*
We can't be articulate all the time, and articulation in itself is a construct created by the white patriarchy. *Recognize and understand everyone's differences in experience and level of understanding.* If you need a moment to formulate words, take that time.
- VII. *Use 'I' statements.*
We will speak from our experience and share our thoughts and feelings rather than speak for an entire community, race, gender identity, etc.
- VIII. *Communicate your needs and ask questions:*
Sometimes, we need things from our community to grow and be safe. Communicate those to us or privately to the professor when they arise. Further, if you want to know

something, ask it. We can only improve when we want to learn and be better. Knowledge is power. Remember - a closed mouth does not get fed.

IX. Don't assume identity:

You never know how people move through the world; by assuming someone's identity, you assume their experience. Understand intersectionality and that some people occupy multiple identities.

X. We Honor Privacy and Confidentiality:

The Lessons may leave, but the stories stay. Don't speak for others without explicit permission, and don't share something communicated in a private or safe space

Directing Lab Assignment

THR 371 - Process in Production
Prof Nigel Semaj

Fall 2022
Directing Labs

Director's Lab Workshop is a model of workshopping to observe you as directors in the rehearsal room. This workshop model gives maximum feedback on your practical work with actors and analytical skills. In these workshops, you will be observed on how you bring what you have learned in class into the rehearsal room, how you organize your rehearsal time, and how you challenge yourself.

This directing course is titled Process in Production. The workshops you engage in will focus primarily on your work process. You will engage in three different workshops.

- I. ***Monologue***
The first workshop will consist of a monologue wherein you will focus on a section/monologue from the selected plays.
- II. ***A Scene***
In this workshop, directors will select a scene to analyze and direct.
- III. ***Presentation***
In this lab, you will present a fully staged presentation of your monologue or scene.

Directors will have the option of the following plays to choose their monologues and scenes from:

Everybody by Brandon Jacob Jenkins
Black Hollow by Aeneas Sagar Hemphill
The Last Days of Judas Iscariot by Stephen Adley Guirgis
Metamorphoses by Mary Zimmerman
Language of Angels by Naomi Iizuka
The Normal Heart by Larry Kramer

A maximum of three directors per play will be allowed. When selecting plays, directors should note their top three choices.

THR 371 - Process in Production
Prof Nigel Semaj

Fall 2022
Directing Labs

Director's Lab Instructor Workshop

You will learn to “assist” hands-on in the room with the instructor in these workshops. There will be three specific Director Labs where the instructor will work as the primary director in the room. You and your directing team will work together to assist.

For the workshop, you will receive:

- Script (Printed)
 - In some cases, you will already have a copy. Bring that prepared with your notes and analysis.
- Writing materials for
 - Rehearsal note-taking
 - Script notation

The Instructor Labs will be:

- I. Tablework Lab - Come Here, Scrawny by Emma Horwitz
The director will lead a tablework rehearsal focusing on Character and Language Analysis.
- II. Pacing Workshop - Come Here, Scrawny by Emma Horwitz
Putting the play on its feet for the first time, the director will focus on the pacing of Emma Horwitz's Come Here, Scrawny.
- III. Monologue Workshop - *For Colored Girls* by Ntozake Shange
The director will lead the first workshop that leads to the director's lab monologues. Using Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls*, the rehearsal will focus on pulling performances out of the actor.
- IV. Composition Lab - *Argonautika* by Mary Zimmerman
Directors will collaborate to create staging and composition for Mary Zimmerman's *Argonautika*.
- V. Scene Workshop - Come Here, Scrawny by Emma Horwitz
The director will lead the first workshop that leads to the director's lab scenes. Then, returning to Horwitz's Come Here, Scrawny, the director will stage and rehearse the scene on its feet.

In addition to reading the scripts, you should review previous analytical readings and read any supplemental readings. Take note of your findings and tools. Your director (the instructor) will rely on you to assist in the room. Please come prepared.

After the lab, your scripts and rehearsal notes will be gathered and submitted to your instructor for review.

THR 371 - Process in Production
Prof Nigel Semaj

Fall 2022
Directing Labs

Directors Lab Monologue

Welcome to the Director's Lab Monologue Workshop! This workshop will consist of three stages and three major components. This workshop will give you maximum feedback on your practical work with actors and analytical skills. The first workshop will consist of a monologue wherein you will focus on a section/monologue from the selected plays.

The skills needed to direct/coach an actor will be demonstrated in the introduction to the director's lab, where your professor will serve as the director, with the remaining class serving as assistant directors. This observation will serve as the first key component of the workshop. In this introduction, you will learn tips and techniques for drawing out performances in an actor, as well as language to use in the rehearsal room.

You will cast these workshops from the students in the classroom. For your monologue, you should meet at *least* once before the day of your workshop. Your rehearsals should be structured so that you come prepared to class, ready to continue the work you have begun.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

A complete analysis of your monologue, your director's statement, and a check-in meeting with the professor are due the day before your workshop. You can make an appointment using calendly.com/nsemaj.

In this meeting, please be prepared to discuss your director's statement, analysis work, the work you've done with your actor thus far, your plan for the workshop, and any questions/comments/concerns you may have

DURING THE WORKSHOP:

During the workshop, you will have twenty minutes to work on your monologues with your actor. After all workshop participants have gone, you will receive feedback as a group with the other directors who presented work with you.

AFTER YOUR WORKSHOP:

Your notes from the workshop and reflection are due no more than 48 hours after your workshop.

THR 371 - Process in Production
Prof Nigel Semaj

Fall 2022
Directing Labs

MONOLOGUE ANALYSIS:

The analysis for this assignment requires attention to detail and a deep understanding of the text to successfully direct the actor in the room.

Your analysis should be submitted in PDF format using the following format:

- 1.5 Spaced
- 1 Inch Margins
- 12 Point Font Times New Roman

The heading of your document should include the following:

- Top Left Corner: First Name, Last Name
- Top Right Corner: NameOfPlay_Directing Packet

Your analysis should include the following:

- I. Notated Script
- II. Background Information On Play and Playwright
- III. Textual Analysis of Your Play
- IV. Given Circumstances as they relate to your monologue
- V. Identify following:
 - Genre
 - Style
 - Dramatic Structure
 - Five Event Structure of your play.
 - Main Event of your chosen Monologue
- VI. Character Dossier for the Character in your Monologue
- VII. Beat Analysis
- VIII. Glossary of Terms/Allusions/References within the Monologue
- IX. Identify the Mood & Tone

Then answer the following questions:

- How does this monologue fit into the play & what purpose does it serve?
- What are the facts and events that happened before this monologue?
- What are the facts and events of this current monologue?
- What event(s) brought us to this particular monologue, and what event(s) occur after?
- How does this monologue propel the play forward and help get us to the end?
- What changes throughout the monologue?
- How does this monologue start and end?
- Where is the action within the monologue?
- What is the valuable information in this monologue?

THR 371 - Process in Production
Prof Nigel Semaj

Fall 2022
Directing Labs

Director's Lab Scene

Welcome to the Director's Lab Scene Workshop! Like the previous workshop, your scene workshop will consist of some of the same components/requirements with slight alterations and new additions. This workshop will give you maximum 1:1 feedback on your practical on-ground work with actors and analytical skills. In this workshop, directors will select a scene from one of the selected plays to analyze and direct.

The skills needed to direct/coach an actor will be demonstrated in the introduction to the director's lab, where your professor will serve as the director, with the remaining class serving as assistant directors. This observation will serve as the first key component of the workshop. In this introduction, you will learn tips and techniques for drawing out performances in an actor, as well as language to use in the rehearsal room.

You should cast your scene from the students in the classroom and rehearse it at *least* once before the day of your workshop. Rehearsals should be about working through the text and using your analysis work to pull out more profound performances. Your rehearsal should be structured so that you come prepared to class, ready to continue the work you have begun.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

A complete analysis of your monologue, your director's statement, and a check-in meeting with the professor are due the day before your workshop. You can make an appointment using calendly.com/nsemaj.

In this meeting, please be prepared to discuss your director's statement, analysis work, the work you've done with your actor thus far, your plan for the workshop, and any questions/comments/concerns you may have

DURING THE WORKSHOP:

During the workshop, you will have thirty (30) minutes to work on your scene with your actor. You will receive feedback 1:1 with the professor after your workshop and notes from your peers. Directors should arrive and set up what they might need during the rehearsal. Bring any necessary props and rehearsal clothing you will need to direct the scene successfully. Remember that actors are not required to be off book for these workshops.

AFTER YOUR WORKSHOP:

Your notes from the workshop and reflection are due no more than 48 hours after your workshop, along with a 1:1 meeting with the professor. You can make an appointment using: calendly.com/nsemaj.

THR 371 - Process in Production
Prof Nigel Semaj

Fall 2022
Directing Labs

SCENE ANALYSIS

The analysis for this assignment requires attention to detail and a deep understanding of the text to successfully direct the actor in the room. Successful directors will have done the structure of the read, research, and read again before engaging in their textual and story analysis.

Your analysis should be submitted in PDF format using the following format:

- 1.5 Spaced
- 1 Inch Margins
- 12 Point Font Times New Roman

The heading of your document should include the following:

- Top Left Corner: First Name, Last Name
- Top Right Corner: NameOfPlay_Directing Packet

Your analysis should include the following:

- I. Notated Script
- II. Given Circumstances as they relate to your scene
- III. Identify the mood and tone of your scene and the Main Event of your chosen scene
- IV. Character Dossier for the Characters in your scene
- V. Beat Analysis
- VI. Glossary of Terms/Allusions/References within the scene

Then answer the following:

- I. How does this scene fit into the play, and what purpose does it serve being where it is?
- II. What are the facts and events that happened before this scene?
- III. What are the facts and events of this current scene?
- IV. How did the previous scene lead into this one, and how does this one lead us into the next scene?
- V. How does this scene propel the play forward and help get us to the end?
- VI. What changes throughout the scene?
- VII. How does this scene start and end?
- VIII. Where is the action within the scene?
- IX. What is the valuable information in this scene?
- X. What do your characters want from each other? Do they get it? How do they get it?
- XI. What are the relationships of the characters in the scene?
- XII. What language is in the scene? How does it inform the character and scene?

THR 371 - Process in Production
Prof Nigel Semaj

Fall 2022
Directing Labs

Directors Lab Presentation

Welcome to the Director's Lab Presentation!

In this lab, you will present a fully staged presentation of your monologue or scene. Continuing your work from when you began rehearsals and utilizing new skills and feedback, you will present your scene to the class for final feedback and notes.

Because your analysis work will have been completed already, you will only need to turn in the following:

- I. Textual Analysis of the Play
- II. Directors Scream
- III. Director's Vision/Concept

Your analysis should be submitted in PDF format using the following format:

- 1.5 Spaced
- 1 Inch Margins
- 12 Point Font Times New Roman

The heading of your document should include the following:

- Top Left Corner: First Name, Last Name
- Top Right Corner: NameOfPlay_Directing Packet

Your presentation:

- Should not exceed ten minutes in length. Directors who exceed the time limit without permission will not receive the time length credit in the grading rubric for this assignment.
- Should be performed off book. If this presents a concern, please contact your instructor immediately.
- Should be staged and contain necessary props and costumes.

Directors should prepare a slate for the presentation:

SAMPLE SLATE:

Hello, my name is Nigel Semaj, and I will be presenting a scene from *For Colored Girls* by Ntozake Shange, starring Olivia Battle as Lady in Green. Thank you.

After slating, directors will read their director's statements, alerting the audience to their intentions and goals with their monologue or scene.

Script Analysis Assignment

Dramatic Text in Action
Writing Assignment II

Spring 2022
Analytical

“The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.”

- James Baldwin

In this assignment, you and another classmate will be given one of the plays listed on our reading list to analyze. In this analysis, you will be asked to do an in-depth textual analysis of your selected play and co-author a paper that includes an annotated bibliography on the ideas and themes identified within the text. In this assignment, while theatre and other art references are encouraged, the primary basis of your research on the ideas and themes should be non-theatrical texts. This analysis should be somewhere between 10 to 15 pages in length and will require one stage of review with an outside source from a department other than theatre.

This paper including the annotated bibliography will require a works cited page that ***is not*** included in the total page count.

The heading of your document should include the following:

Top Left Corner: First Name, Last Name

Top Right Corner: Name of Text/Performance

Your paper should use the following format:

1.5 Spaced

1 Inch Margins

12 Point Font Times New Roman

This assignment will require the following components to be turned in.

I. ABSTRACT

An abstract is a comprehensive summary of your paper. For this assignment, your abstract should be a comprehensive summary of the ideas of the play and pertinent text analysis findings.

Your abstract should be between 150 and 250 words. **NO EXCEPTIONS**

II. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In this section using the analysis, we have learned about in class thus far you will inform the reader of the following:

- A. Basic information on the play
- B. Pertinent background information on the play's genesis and the playwright.
- C. What the play is about/what the play is asking of its readers.
- D. The main idea of the paper and any pertinent research you found from reading as well as your departmental research.

Dramatic Text in Action
Writing Assignment II

Spring 2022
Analytical

Reread the “Conflicting Impulses” article to get a better understanding of what you should be aiming for regarding textual analysis.

III. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

You will identify and assign names to four ideas within your play. Once you’ve identified these ideas you will:

1. Locate sources that support that specific idea.
2. Write a brief summary of that source and how it applies to the context of your assigned play.

*See Annotated Bibliography for *10,000 Moor* on Canvas.

Each annotation will require three things:

- A. The selected idea.
- B. Citation of source in MLA format.
- C. Annotation of your source.

EXAMPLE:

IDEA

Violence, Revenge, and Justice

CITATION

Gilligan, James. *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*. Vintage Books, 1997.

ANNOTATION

Drawing on his firsthand experience as a prison psychiatrist, Dr. James Gilligan unveils and explores the motives of men who commit horrible crimes. While drawing from real-life examples, and literary examples, Gilligan explores what drives men to commit violent crimes. In this book, Gilligan takes real-life case files of violent men and traces the events in their lives that lead to the committing of whatever violent act they perpetuated. In this, Gilligan views every act of violence as an attempt to right an injustice done to a singular person, or group of

Dramatic Text in Action
Writing Assignment II

Spring 2022
Analytical

persons. This act of injustice is defined by the perpetrator of the violent act and is acted upon in order to “right” what they have felt “wronged” by.

Gilligan also traces the role shame places in the etiology of violence and explains why historically penal systems have only exacerbated it. Much like the men in this book who have committed violent crimes, the characters of *Titus* are all in the search to right an injustice that has been committed against them. “*Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*” explains the role that shame, pride, and being made to feel “othered”, play in the committing of violent acts. While there are people who still review *Titus Andronicus* as a revenge tragedy, this book brings to light the negative connotations that have been thrust onto the notion of revenge. We have come to know revenge to be petty, and unmotivated in society. Gilligan refuses to look at this through a moral lens, but rather through the lens of motivation and *why* people commit violent acts. This idea of violence and revenge ring true to the characters of *Titus Andronicus*. This play, while most will say is about violence, I would argue it is about *why* our characters commit the atrocious acts they do. Tamora, Titus, and Aaron are seeking justice for their children within the text of *10,000 Moor*. Their love for their children is what drives them, and when those children are taken from them, they commit acts of violence to right that wrong.

IV. WORKS CITED PAGE

Using MLA format, list all sources used in the research, analysis and writing of your paper.

Dramatic Text in Action
Writing Assignment II

Spring 2022
Analytical

V. CO-PARTNER REVIEW

You will be asked to write an informal response detailing the following:

1. Your specific contributions.
2. Your co-partner's contributions.
3. Your overall experience working with your partner.

Then finally you will answer the following questions using
(HIGHLY AGREE, AGREE, NEUTRAL, DISAGREE, or HIGHLY DISAGREE) :

1. I contributed equally to this assignment.
2. My partner(s) contributed equally to this assignment.
3. I communicated with my partner(s) often and in a timely fashion.
4. My partner(s) were communicative and in a timely fashion.

DUE - APRIL 4th, 2022

04

EVALUATIONS & REVIEWS

- SELF APPRAISAL
- DEPARTMENT CHAIR EVALUATION
- STUDENT EVALUATION

Nigel Semaj - VAP Self Appraisal

21/22 AY

I began my VAP appointment at Muhlenberg in August 2020. My first year has been enriching, challenging and has allowed growth in my pedagogical approaches. The following self-assessment will discuss my performance for the 20/21 academic year.

In my first semester, I taught two sections of THR 371: Process in Production.

In the Fall, THR 371 focused on the director's work with actors in a workshop rehearsal process. Students engaged in directorial analysis in the first half of the class, focusing on beats, events, themes/ideas, pacing, language, and more. Students' second half of the semester utilized those skills in rehearsal workshop spaces with actors. The goal of this course was to learn how to communicate their analysis to actors to get dynamic and engaging performances.

Currently, I am teaching THR 371: Process in Production, THR 336: Histories of Queer Performance, and THR 107: Dramatic Text In Action. Both THR 336 and THR 107 are writing-intensive courses.

Initially intending to focus on Staging and Composition through analysis, THR 371's intention shifted to focus on short plays, ten-minute plays and working collaboratively on script analysis. In doing this, students were able to grasp analytical concepts more, and by shorter texts, were able to delve deeper into their script analysis.

In two separate collaborative sessions (Comp Lab), students were able to do interdisciplinary collaborative directing:

- Students directed/choreographed a poem from Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls*, examining how movement and dance can propel a story with Manuela Sanchez of the Earl Mosley dance company,
- Frederick Wright Jones and his Sculpture I class students staged devised moments using various cardboard structures constructed by his students.
- Students will get the opportunity to observe director Jane Skapek, a colleague who works in a new play development workshop reading a piece of my work.

In Tablework Sessions, using each other as actors in the room, students as a class directed performers through ten-minute plays and short scene plays using the analysis skills they developed as a community.

THR 336 focuses on various queer media: theatre, music, film, television, fashion, and even visual art. After each consumed media, we list the elements/tropes/conventions of queer performance within that specific medium. Ultimately we will lay all of these lists side by side and create - as a community- a definition of Queer Performance.

In THR 107, students worked to define language, culture, & history, read Aristotle's Poetics, Audre Lorde's "The Master's Tools...", and engaged in discussions on Intersectionality and Identity Politics. Weekly, as a community, we engage in conversations around plays and text analysis within the frameworks of the definitions above, texts, and theories. With a shared language, students were better able to understand and engage in conversations around the plays in the class. My writing-intensive courses are discussion-based, giving students an equal voice in their education and how the class learns and grows.

Nigel Semaj - VAP Self Appraisal

21/22 AY

This semester, I am also teaching a Dana Scholars Independent Study with a student outside of the theatre program. She is researching and writing about representation and inclusivity in RuPaul's Drag Race.

20/21 **Current** professional credits:

- Movement Director/Choreographer/Fight for Heartbeat Opera's *Fidelio*. Premiered at The Met Museum, toured to The Modvai Center UC Davis, CA, Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, AZ, and The Broad Stage, Santa Monica, CA: Was praised as a New York Times Critics Pick.
- Taught a Guest Lecture at Long Island University Brooklyn on Adapting Theatre Texts.
- Fight Choreographer for new Horror Film (further details cannot be shared at the moment)
- Directing/Choreographing Summer Stock production of Matilda the Musical at the CAC in Williamsport, PA.

Service to School/Participation:

- Direction of *Call Me By Any Other Name...Just As Sweet*
- Race and Power Curriculum Designation Meetings (APC)
- Mentor/Advisor for 2 MTA Studios Productions
- Mentor/Faculty Support for Student Research Grant Proposal
- Teaching Triangles participation (MCTL)

Goals for Next Year:

- Continue developing my course guide creations to provide students with the tools to succeed in my courses.
- In recognizing that every directing cohort I teach will be different, I hope to redevelop my directing class structure to have a "fork in the road/choose your adventure" structure. So, for example, if I provide the same first four weeks of the semester, I can utilize those four weeks to observe my directors and then choose a course of study that suits their needs based on my observations.
- Continue fostering relationships through various departments and work for intercourse assignment collaboration.
- Use my reviews from the chair and my students to improve my pedagogical approaches.
- Develop my course content to be more engaging, challenging, and stimulating.
- Improv on my email correspondence.
- Become more specific and detailed in my course materials, focusing on quality rather than quantity in particular areas.
- Continue supporting the Race and Power designation proposal through the APC.
- Direct another production focusing on scene work with actors and continue to utilize restorative justice practices and an anti-racist rehearsal process.

Nigel Semaj Performance Appraisal, 2021 – 2022
Submitted by James Peck, Theatre Program Chair

Teaching

Nigel had a strong first year as a professor at Muhlenberg. They taught multiple sections of the studio class Directing: Process in Production, as well as two seminar – style classes, The History of Queer Performance and Dramatic Text in Action. Across all of these classes, they showed their wide knowledge, insightful artistry, civically engaged sensibility, and sincere care for the holistic well – being and development of their students. Their syllabi are ambitious and thoughtfully designed. Their readings and assignments often sit at the confluence of artistic and social contexts in ways that challenge settled arrangements of knowledge and power, engaging particularly with anti – racist and queer perspectives.

I was fortunate to attend a session of Nigel’s directing class Directing: Process in Production. In the class I witnessed, the time was split between collective dramaturgical analysis of a short ten minute play, and viewing and discussion of four video clips chosen to highlight the directorial tool of pacing. Both sections of the class were thoughtfully planned, and skillfully executed. As regards the first half of class, Nigel had selected a short, funny, but also emotionally complex play about socks in a sock drawer. Though cheeky, the play is in fact a beautiful, poetic exploration of loneliness, exclusion, and belonging. It’s really, really lovely. Nigel led the students in a substantive dramaturgical analysis of the play, directing their attention to key transitions, burrowing into metaphoric implications, and beginning to imagine the transition from the page to the stage. For the second half of class, Nigel had selected four strongly contrasting clips with bold choices about the key directorial tool of pacing. They showed the clips and the class discussed how the pacing choices shaped the audience’s experience. Again, the material was well chosen, and the conversation insightful and skillfully facilitated.

Especially noteworthy is Nigel’s engagement with their students as individuals. They are searching for pedagogic structures that create space for students to become the agents of their own learning, and to identify and pursue their deepest interests. To their great credit, Nigel is willing to shift direction in order to make that happen. Their self – evaluation is to a good measure about this process of discovery, and that’s a wonderful point of focus for the document.

Nigel’s self – evaluation includes several goals for next year. It is good to see Nigel reflecting on their practice in this way. I think all of the goals make sense and will make Nigel’s classes even more fruitful. I would especially agree with their proposal to, where possible, judiciously cut back on quantity in order to make space for the sort of sustained analysis that emphasizes quality. In saying this, I want to be clear that I think the quality of engagement is high. But also, in reviewing their course maps and attending class, I do think that sometimes considering less material in a more extended way will allow for focus on the details in ways that students will find to be beneficial. Nigel has great insight, and students will benefit from hearing their perspective.

Nigel strongly met the College's expectations for Teaching. With respect to their commitment to students as individuals, especially their search for the most effective methods for the learning styles and educational ambitions of particular students, they exceeded expectations.

Professional Activity

Nigel had a productive year as a director and theatre maker. At Muhlenberg, they co – wrote and directed a powerful queer adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Call Me By Any Other Name ... Just as Sweet*. Nigel decolonized the classical text, transposing the setting to contemporary queer House ballroom culture. This combination of elements allowed for an urgent, topical, and vitalizing experience. The production was visually arresting, kinetically supercharged, and emotionally moving. The students performed with palpable commitment on every register; it was manifest they knew they were doing something special.

Also at Muhlenberg, Nigel performed a leading role in Earl Mosley's piece *Unconquered* and led the talkback that followed. As Mr. Mosley said in the talkback, it is courageous of faculty to allow themselves the vulnerability of performing alongside and for their students.

In addition to their work at Muhlenberg, Nigel also maintains a national presence in the field. They served as Movement Director/Choreographer/Fight Director for Heartbeat Opera's production of Beethoven's *Fidelio*. The production debuted at the Met Museum in New York City and toured to the American Southwest and Southern California, where it received strong reviews. In a manner somewhat similar to Nigel's production of *Call Me By Any Other Name ...*, this production also "updated" the production to address contemporary life, in this case the mass incarceration of Black men in the United States. It is good to see the clarity and force of Nigel's artistic vision in the confluence of their projects across several venues.

Given the large amount of work Nigel made this year, its high quality, and the esteemed venues of their professional work outside Muhlenberg, Nigel exceeded the College's expectations for Professional Activity.

College Service

Nigel regularly attends Theatre program meetings. They have served on two program working groups, one to craft a statement about attendance practices, and one to plan a year - end celebration. Recently, they volunteered to work on the department's anti-racist action plan working group. They served as the mentor for two MTA studio productions, and I know that the directors were very grateful for their support and counsel. They have also been engaged with the wider college in a variety of ways, especially the Teaching Triangles program and the APC proposal for a Race and Power GAR. This level of service is appropriate for a first year Visiting Assistant Professor.

Nigel met the College's expectations in the area of College Service.

Summary

Nigel had a strong year in their first year as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Muhlenberg. They showed themselves to be a dedicated and skilled educator, a bold artist with a clear, urgent vision, and an engaged community citizen. I am grateful for the presence and look forward to our continued work together.

Nigel Semaj
Muhlenberg College

AY21/22
IDEA QUALITATIVE & FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

COURSE: THR 371- Process in Production - Section 01

SEMESTER: FALL 2021

ENROLLED: 13

RESPONDED: 4

RESPONSE RATE: 30.77 %

Nigel is an excellent teacher and moreso, an invaluable addition to the theatre and dance department. They make students feel SO comfortable in their own skin.

They are a great professor! They presented information clearly, and understanding the material was always easy. They're also incredibly funny, which made a 9 AM course actually fun and engaging. I thought the directing workshops were a great opportunity and I found them so helpful. Every one-on-one meeting I had with them left me feeling more confident about my work and progress in the class. The only thing is I never had any idea what my grade was in the class or how I was doing, but that's incredibly minor and just a nitpick compared to how amazing they were otherwise!

PLEASE keep this human around for as long as possible! They are an absolute gem and are probably my favorite professor I've had at 'Berg (but certainly top 3). I learned so much about directing, and about myself, in this course and have never felt more supported in an artistic and academic space. Their first semester out, Nigel was able to create a space that was inviting and inclusive and made it comfortable to experience both success and failure while in class. It was also just so comfortable to walk and chat with them and they made me feel so valued as an individual. They made themselves available outside of class and encouraged us to have conversations with them about course material but were also open to talking about life and other directing endeavors. I was able to talk to them about the show I was directing, Assembly, and they sat in on late-night rehearsals and I think the time they put in outside of the classroom cannot go unnoticed. It is SO appreciated and I'm so thankful to have been in this class. Thank god I am leaving before they are because I think they are such a brilliant addition to the T & D faculty and I don't know what I'd do without them around. So much love.

Nigel Semaj
Muhlenberg College

AY21/22

IDEA QUALITATIVE & FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

Teaching Methods and Styles

Teaching Essentials	Suggested Action	
Found ways to help students answer their own questions	NA to relevant objectives	▲
Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter	Consider increasing use	▲
Made it clear how each topic fit into the course	Retain current use or consider increasing	▲
Explained course material clearly and concisely	Strength to retain	▲
Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject	Strength to retain	▲
Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them	Consider increasing use	▲
Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class (e.g., office visits, phone calls, email)	NA to relevant objectives	▲
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Suggested Action	
Helped students to interpret subject matter from diverse perspectives (e.g., different cultures, religions, genders, political views)	Strength to retain	▲
Encouraged students to reflect on and evaluate what they have learned	Strength to retain	▲
Provided meaningful feedback on students' academic performance	Strength to retain	▲
Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses	Retain current use or consider increasing	▲
Related course material to real life situations	Strength to retain	▲
Created opportunities for students to apply course content outside the classroom	Strength to retain	▲
Collaborative Learning	Suggested Action	
Formed teams or groups to facilitate learning	Consider increasing use	▲
Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own	Consider increasing use	▲
Asked students to help each other understand ideas or concepts	Consider increasing use	▲
Active Learning	Suggested Action	
Encouraged students to use multiple resources (e.g., Internet, library holdings, outside experts) to improve understanding	Consider increasing use	▲
Involved students in hands-on projects such as research, case studies, or real life activities	Strength to retain	▲
Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking	Strength to retain	▲

Nigel Semaj
Muhlenberg College

AY21/22
IDEA QUALITATIVE & FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

COURSE: THR 371- Process in Production-Section 02

SEMESTER: FALL 2021

ENROLLED: 13

RESPONDED: 4

RESPONSE RATE: 30.77 %

Nigel is one of the best professors I've ever had at Muhlenberg. This class really challenged me, and has prepared me well for directing opportunities on and off campus. I always felt safe, comfortable, and heard in the space they created for us. The work load was heavy, but that is the only downside I had to the course. Nigel was very flexible and understanding.

Nigel is a brilliant, insightful and talented professor and I feel so lucky to have taken their class. They are always willing to help and provide information on not only how to be a better director, but to be a better human in general.

I loved and learned a lot from this class! The only thing is that I wish there was a way to make sure everyone got the same amount of opportunities to act, because I felt like some people acted more than others.

Nigel Semaj
Muhlenberg College

AY21/22

IDEA QUALITATIVE & FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

Teaching Methods and Styles

Teaching Essentials	Suggested Action
Found ways to help students answer their own questions	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Made it clear how each topic fit into the course	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Explained course material clearly and concisely	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class (e.g., office visits, phone calls, email)	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Suggested Action
Helped students to interpret subject matter from diverse perspectives (e.g., different cultures, religions, genders, political views)	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Encouraged students to reflect on and evaluate what they have learned	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Provided meaningful feedback on students' academic performance	<i>Consider increasing use</i> ▲
Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Related course material to real life situations	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Created opportunities for students to apply course content outside the classroom	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Collaborative Learning	Suggested Action
Formed teams or groups to facilitate learning	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Asked students to help each other understand ideas or concepts	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Active Learning	Suggested Action
Encouraged students to use multiple resources (e.g., Internet, library holdings, outside experts) to improve understanding	<i>Consider increasing use</i> ▲
Involved students in hands-on projects such as research, case studies, or real life activities	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲

Nigel Semaj
Muhlenberg College

AY21/22
IDEA QUALITATIVE & FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

COURSE: THR 107 - Dramatic Text in Action

SEMESTER: SPRING 2022

ENROLLED: 22

RESPONDED: 9

RESPONSE RATE: 40.91%

I really enjoyed the depths to which Nigel teaches and pulls their students to really think critically. They did a wonderful job of disestablishing white theater and providing us with a much richer sense of theater and artists that involved culture and BIPOC folks. It was hard work but super fulfilling.

Thank you for a great semester! You opened my eyes to a lot of theatrical topics that I would never have learned without it. I will miss the class next year.

You're the best professor/director/person/dog parent slay the boots down stream ain't shit by doja cat

Great great class. Learning how to analyze dramatic structure and be specific has greatly changed the way I read plays.

Nigel is an incredible professor. Their course curriculum is purposeful, meaningful, and engaging. They are excellent at facilitating class discussion and communicating with students. Nigel is understanding, welcoming, and provokes students to think beyond the norms of classroom discussion and theatrical possibility. This is the best course I've taken at Muhlenberg so far, and a large part of that is due to Nigel and their teaching efforts. We need more professors like Nigel at Berg, they are a valuable member of our community!

A life-changing professor to have. I hope they stay here for many years; it's hard to put into words how much they add to and are vital to this department.

Nigel Semaj
Muhlenberg College

AY21/22
IDEA QUALITATIVE & FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

Teaching Methods and Styles

Teaching Essentials	Suggested Action
Found ways to help students answer their own questions	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Made it clear how each topic fit into the course	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Explained course material clearly and concisely	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class (e.g., office visits, phone calls, email)	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Suggested Action
Helped students to interpret subject matter from diverse perspectives (e.g., different cultures, religions, genders, political views)	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Encouraged students to reflect on and evaluate what they have learned	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Provided meaningful feedback on students' academic performance	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Related course material to real life situations	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Created opportunities for students to apply course content outside the classroom	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Collaborative Learning	Suggested Action
Formed teams or groups to facilitate learning	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Asked students to help each other understand ideas or concepts	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Active Learning	Suggested Action
Encouraged students to use multiple resources (e.g., Internet, library holdings, outside experts) to improve understanding	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Involved students in hands-on projects such as research, case studies, or real life activities	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲

Nigel Semaj
Muhlenberg College

AY21/22
IDEA QUALITATIVE & FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

COURSE: THR 336 - Histories of Queer Performance

SEMESTER: SPRING 2022

ENROLLED: 22

RESPONDED: 9

RESPONSE RATE: 40.91%

This was such a fun course and I have signed up to take Nigel's directing course next semester because I loved their teaching style so much. I have thoroughly enjoyed taking this class and the way it was taught.

Having a black non binary queer professor that I can look up to that is unapologetically themselves did more for me and the theatre community than any class taught by a straight white professor. Please seek out more professors that care for their students, care about students identifies and respect each students limitations and adapt to meet the student where they are. Nigel did an amazing job at doing all of these things to ensure I can have the education that Im paying for. Thank you for helping me understand my art, myself and my identity.

I am extremely happy to be ending my Muhlenberg experience with this course. Thank you so much for a such a fun and engaging course!

Nigel is a very personable professor who created a sense of community in this class. While the subject matter was not as academically challenging, they encouraged discussion and disagreement between students, which challenged my communication skills as well as working with others.

This class was fantastic, and Nigel is fantastic! PLEASE offer this course again in the future; it's so important to have classes surrounding queerness in every academic space, especially in a theatre program. I couldn't recommend Nigel as a professor enough, and I couldn't recommend the history of queer performance enough!

Nigel Has so much care for their students. They made the classroom environment safe for open and honest communication, and supported and guided us through it all. I enjoyed coming to class because the material was so rich and I felt heard and seen always. They are absolutely wonderful.

Not only was it refreshing to have a course at Muhlenberg that celebrated queer identities of so many different types, but the instruction of this course was incredibly compelling and intriguing. Every conversation was stimulating and engaging, and having Nigel as a professor made me want to put more effort forward for this class.

Nigel Semaj
Muhlenberg College

AY21/22
IDEA QUALITATIVE & FORMATIVE EVALUATIONS

Teaching Methods and Styles

Teaching Essentials	Suggested Action
Found ways to help students answer their own questions	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Made it clear how each topic fit into the course	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Explained course material clearly and concisely	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class (e.g., office visits, phone calls, email)	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Reflective and Integrative Learning	Suggested Action
Helped students to interpret subject matter from diverse perspectives (e.g., different cultures, religions, genders, political views)	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Encouraged students to reflect on and evaluate what they have learned	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Provided meaningful feedback on students' academic performance	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Related course material to real life situations	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Created opportunities for students to apply course content outside the classroom	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Collaborative Learning	Suggested Action
Formed teams or groups to facilitate learning	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Asked students to help each other understand ideas or concepts	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲
Active Learning	Suggested Action
Encouraged students to use multiple resources (e.g., Internet, library holdings, outside experts) to improve understanding	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Involved students in hands-on projects such as research, case studies, or real life activities	<i>Retain current use or consider increasing</i> ▲
Gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking	<i>Strength to retain</i> ▲

05

Workshops & Programming

- WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT PROGRAMMING
- HISTORICAL RESTRAINTS FOR SPECULATIVE FUTURES PANEL
- EDI TRAINING FOR SEASON COMMITTEE PLANNING

Nigel Semaj

We Are Proud to Present Programming

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Africa, From the German Südwestafrika, Between the Years 1884–1915*, six actors gather to tackle the challenge of theatrically presenting the little-known story of the first genocide of the 20th century.

Armed only with boxes of letters from German soldiers they sent home to their wives and families, our characters are maneuvering how to tell the history of this Genocide when the only record that remains is of the perpetrators' story. If that was not enough of a challenge, they must also maneuver how to talk to each other about racism, genocide, and systemic oppression.

Along the way, they test the limits of empathy as their own stories, subjectivities, assumptions, and prejudices catalyze their theatrical process. Ultimately the play takes a dark turn as the American wounds and the historical tragedy overlap within this ensemble's process.

This project seeks to include post-show facilitations, roundtable discussions, and workshops to accompany the production during its run. This work would also include collaborations with outside guest artists and in-school partnerships. This project seeks to answer the following: *Challenge 1: How do we engage in conversations surrounding DEI and Anti-Racism for the future while confronting the historical oppression, systemic racism, and erasure of the past? Challenge 2: How do we begin to learn to have difficult conversations around race, racism, white supremacy, and its history? And Challenge 3: How do center communities and open dialogue when addressing DEI and Anti-Racism work towards more equitable practices in the future?*

By collaborating with the following organizations and guest speakers, this project aims to achieve the above.

II. COLLABORATIONS, FACILITATORS, and GUEST ARTISTS:

The Center for Ethics: Speculative Futures

Our contemporary moment is shaped by the pressures of multiple, simultaneous crises: between the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing crises of political legitimacy, growing economic inequality, and the looming threat of irrevocable climate disaster, the future seems murkier than ever. Longstanding questions about what the future holds are haunted by doubts. Fears about scarcity and the changing world seem to hamper opportunities for solidarity and coalition-building. At the same time, this juncture presents an opportunity

Nigel Semaj

We Are Proud to Present Programming

to reimagine the future we want and how we might get there. In thinking about the future as something speculative -- and something we might *speculate about* -- we might collectively resist fatalism and think instead about the world we hope to see. We might think about how art helps us envision alternative possibilities; how new and evolving technologies change the ways we relate to each other and the world; and about how shifting forms of politics also offer new opportunities for resistance.

HERSHEY VAZQUEZ MILLNER (she/her) is a producer and arts administrator with experience in casting, dramaturgy, and engagement. She has worked with organizations such as the Alliance Theatre, McCarter Theatre Center, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company, and the Sappho Project. In addition, she is a former member of the BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle. Hershey is passionate about community partnerships, ethical intern programs, and anti-racism/anti-bias work. Currently, she is pursuing her MA in Religious Studies with a Concentration in Non-Profit Management at Georgia State University. She received a dual-degree BA in Archaeology and Religion at Lycoming College. Hershey is an experienced facilitator and public speaker. Her conversations have included artists, educators, audience members, and numerous theater professionals. She currently serves as the Program Associate for Nicole Brewer's Anti-Racist Theatre, a company that utilizes a unique approach blending anti-racist theory, social justice, collectivism, healing justice, and theatre exercises for an embodied understanding of racism and our agency to become anti-racist. Hershey's extensive resume and training prove her to be a force in anti-racist work and a theatre professional who has worked casting, producing, and audience engagement.

III. WORKSHOPS AND FACILITATION

1. POST-SHOW FACILITATION

The play comes to an all-time high WHITE MAN, and ANOTHER WHITE MAN begin to hurl racial epithets at BLACK MAN and recite racist jokes. The audience will witness this verbal assault and then witness the use of a noose placed around BLACK MAN's neck. The visual recalls the disgusting horrors of past lynchings and can leave the audience reeling. This project proposes post-show conversations to allow the audience to process their reactions to the end of the play.

These conversations would be co-facilitated with members of the directorial team, guest artists, and Muhlenberg community members.

2. COMMON HOUR DISCUSSION w/CENTER FOR ETHICS

Friday, September 30, 2022,
Center for Ethics Panel Workshop
2:00 PM - Moyer Forum

TOPIC: Historical Constraints for Speculative Futures.

Nigel Semaj

We Are Proud to Present Programming

How are the futures we can imagine constrained, produced, and shaped by history/histories? In *We Are Proud to Present*, we are presented with two different forms of discrimination and racial violence from different times and places. And yet, these two moments have real resonances and interconnections: examining the genocide of the Herero through the lens of racism, slavery, and the lynching of Black bodies in the American South, the actors find themselves haunted by traces of the past. What resources do these legacies of violence offer us for imagining a more liberated future?

Curated by Nigel Semaj and Archana Kaku through the Center for Ethics

Featuring Panelists:

Dr. Emanuela Kucik, Dr. Binta Bah, Dr. Sahar Sadeghi, Dr. Sarah Runcie, Hershey Vazquez Millner and facilitated by Nigel Semaj

3. SDP MATINEE WORKSHOP
Saturday, October 1, 2022
Sedehi Project Workshop 4:00 - 5:30
 Baker Center for The Arts

Utilizing the production of *We Are Proud to Present* by Jackie Sibblies Drury, SDP Facilitators will lead group discussions on the governing question: ***“How do we become more ethical collaborators?”*** First, the SDP Dialogues will closely examine the differences in how the characters within the play navigate challenging material and difficult conversations. Then, groups will think critically on and discuss how their own identities & experiences influence how they navigate conversations surrounding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism.

Dr. Leticia Robles-Moreno, Nigel Semaj, and SDP 22/23 Director Elizabeth Muriel

4. CREATIVE ARTS WORKSHOP
Tuesday, October 4, 2022
 Creative Arts Panel Workshop
 Seegers 113 - 5:00 - 6:15

The Power of Art: How Artists Influence Social Justice

Spanish Painter and artist, Pablo Picasso stated: “Painting is not made to decorate apartments. It's an offensive and defensive weapon against the enemy.”

Nigel Semaj

We Are Proud to Present Programming

Using creative and artistic expression to bring about awareness, cultural shifts, and social change spans various disciplines such as visual art, theatre, dance, photography, film, music, poetry, and more. Artists can begin to shift and change the world when we use art as a means for social change. How do we do this? And what are our responsibilities as artists? Is it our responsibility?

IV. Budget for Guest Artist Hershey

Hershey's rate for this contract would be \$2,500 plus travel, accommodations, and a per diem. This rate includes the 5.5 - 6.5 hours of facilitation, the prep time for each event, and all meetings/correspondence between now and September 29th.

Historical Constraints for Speculative Futures Panel Script and Questions

- I. Welcome and Thanks
 - A. Center for Ethics
 - B. Theatre and Dance
 - C. Mark Stein and Archana Kaku.

II. Introductions

Dr. Emanuela Kucik is an Assistant Professor of English and Africana Studies and the Director of Africana Studies.

She is also the Inaugural Faculty Fellow for DEI Initiatives at Muhlenberg College. She received her Ph.D. and M.A. in English from Princeton University with concentrations in Race and Genocide Studies and a Doctoral Graduate Certificate in African American Studies. She received her B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Her interdisciplinary research and courses explore the intersections of literature, genocide, race, and human rights violations, and her forthcoming book, *The Black Blood of Genocide*, focuses on how Black populations have used the concept of genocide to write about anti-Black violence.

In courses such as Genocide and Blackness in the Post-Holocaust World, Holocaust Literature, Global Black Literature, Literature of Genocide, and others, she guides students toward an expanded understanding of concepts we think we know, including genocide, Blackness, and literature. She uses these innovative definitions to help students understand how marginalized populations have used literature to combat violence and turn their stories into art and to highlight how literature emphasizes our global humanity by reminding us that we are citizens of one world who are connected to not only the people waiting for us at home but also to those we will never meet – except within the pages of our books.

Amid the currents of violence swirling around us today, I lead students to literature to illustrate how renowned authors have struggled with the same questions that haunt them, such as “Where do I fit into freedom fighting movements? What can I do to fix our world?” Using these questions as guideposts on a hopeful path to transformation, she creates spaces in which students can find answers in the imaginative, creative possibilities of literature, in class discussions, and, ultimately, in themselves.

Dr. Binta Bah is a CFD Fellow/Visiting Assistant Professor in Education.

She teaches Educational Psychology: Child Learning and Development and Educational Psychology: Adolescent Learning and Development. She earned her Ph.D. in Teaching and

Historical Constraints for Speculative Futures Panel Script and Questions

Learning from the Graduate School of Education at The Ohio State University, specializing in Multicultural and Equity Studies in Education.

Binta is a scholar in the field of Multicultural and Equity Studies in Education and a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) consultant. Guided by a central focus on the naming and theorizing of anti-blackness specificity, her research utilizes Afro-pessimism, Critical Race Theory, and Cultural Studies to examine and address anti-blackness in educational policy and programmatic reform initiatives.

Dr. Sahar Sadeghi is an Assistant Professor of Sociology.

She teaches various courses, including the Sociology of Inequality and Power, American Ethnic Diversity, Transnational Migrant Communities, Global Perspectives on Race and Racism, and Sociological Theory. Dr. Sadeghi is also a faculty mentor for several students working on their undergraduate research projects.

Professor Sadeghi earned her Ph.D. in 2014 from the Department of Sociology at Temple University. Her research is organized around several interrelated projects and themes – migration and geopolitics, as well as racialized and politicized belonging – which are examined through cross-national, qualitative methods approach with a regional specialization in contemporary Europe and the United States. In her most recent work, Sadeghi considers how the rise of anti-immigrant movements across Europe, the 2015 Refugee Crisis, and the 2016 Iran Deal is reflected in the perceptions and experiences of belonging and membership of Iranians in the US and Germany.

Dr. Sarah Runcie is an Assistant Professor of History

She is a historian of modern Africa with particular interests in public health and decolonization in West and Central Africa. Dr. Runcie is currently working on a book manuscript exploring how Cameroonian doctors negotiated international health programs and enduring colonial medical institutions as they built a national health administration in the first decade of independence. This project draws on archival research she conducted in Cameroon, France, Switzerland, and the United States and interviews with former Cameroonian medical personnel.

Guest Panelist Hershey Vazquez Millner is a producer and arts administrator with experience in casting, dramaturgy, and engagement. They currently work with Klapper Casting in NYC and have worked with organizations such as the Alliance Theatre, McCarter Theatre Center, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company, and the Sappho Project. In addition, they are a former member of the BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle. Hershey is passionate about intimacy education in theatre, ethical intern programs, and

Historical Constraints for Speculative Futures Panel Script and Questions

anti-racism/anti-bias work. They have recently received their MA in Religious Studies with a Concentration in Non-Profit Management at Georgia State University. They received a dual-degree BA in Archaeology and Religion at Lycoming College. Hershey is an experienced facilitator and public speaker. Their conversations have included artists, educators, audience members, and numerous theater professionals. They have worked as the Program Associate for Nicole Brewer's Anti-Racist Theatre, a company that utilizes a unique approach blending anti-racist theory, social justice, collectivism, healing justice, and theatre exercises for an embodied understanding of racism and our agency to become anti-racist. Hershey's extensive resume and training prove them to be a force in anti-racist work and a theatre professional who has worked casting, producing, and audience engagement.

III. What are we here to talk about: Speculative Futures and We Are Proud to Present

IV. Questions

- A. I think this play is about a lot and has many things in it, but the key thing is that through all the nonsense and joking, there are some really important tidbits that are said and almost thrown away. Actor 1 says, "Its about touching something real," to which Actor 5 so eloquently puts, "Like our ability to casually inflict suffering." And I think this line is so poignant. Many of you on our panel study these sufferings, and I'm curious as to what that line might mean to you, or more so what it might say that we in the world, on a nearly daily basis, are capable of "casually" inflicting suffering. Casually being the operative word there.
- B. Dr. Kucik, this is often known as the invisible genocide, but is also one of the first of its kind, setting a precedent for more erasure and countless lives stolen. I'm curious as to your thoughts on why this particular genocide is known as popularly (if that is even the correct word to use.)
- C. Additionally, Dr. Runcie and Dr. Bah, there are many historical moments of violence towards Black bodies that we don't know much about. Many do not know that Lynching just became a federal hate crime 67 years after the murder of Emmett Till, or about the details of The Tulsa Race Massacre, the month-long enduring battle of the Little Rock Nine, the dreadful Red Summer, the realities of Reconstruction era, etc. Why might there be gaps in our historical understanding of the world and education systems? Why don't we know these things?
- D. In We Are Proud to Present, the actors place two different forms of discrimination and racial violence from different times and places on the same level and say, "look at this." It creates a violent cacophony of confusion and pain, yet these two

Historical Constraints for Speculative Futures Panel Script and Questions

moments have real resonances and interconnections that speak to one another. In examining the genocide of the Herero through the lens of racism, slavery, and the lynching of Black bodies in the American South, the actors find themselves haunted by traces of the past. How can we use events and atrocities to examine others and the path forward to some form of liberation

- E. Emanuela you brought up in a conversation with me the definition of genocide and how you expand it in your courses to cover things like lynching, slavery as genocide, the murder of Emmett Till - can you talk more to your understanding of the word genocide?
- F. The Germans actually learned quite a lot from America in terms of racism, racial violence, ethnic cleansing, and the such. I'm curious, Dr. Sadeghi, what might your thoughts be on how much American hate, violence, and historical oppression towards Black and African bodies has influenced how the rest of the world has perceived racism and Anti Blackness?
- G. Hershey, you've had quite the career so far since we last saw each other in our tiny PWI liberal arts college. We went through our fair share of microaggressions and just plain aggressions in theatre that I don't know for you but gives me a bit of whiplash when I think back like - what did that actually happen? So I'm wondering, as someone who was steeped in a liberal arts education both as a theatre maker and archeology and religious studies major, and now as someone still pursuing religion and nonprofit work and doing work in community building, restorative practices, and antiracism work - I have a double question 1. What can the content in this production do to highlight the continuing need for community and antiracism work in collaborative places but also interdisciplinary spaces like the liberal arts college? And 2. How do you see the role of theatre as a vehicle for imagining a more liberated future? Is liberation possible, and is art, mainly speaking this production, the right tool for that?
- H. The play uses humor to approach the topic of Genocide and as an entry point to discussing difficult topics. Do you think this is effective or useful? Can we deploy comedy in situations like this, in a time where everything can be seen as insensitive?
- I. One of the big questions in the play is who gets to write and tell these stories. I'm curious to you all, what might our role today be in telling the stories of those who are no longer around or incapable of telling their stories? Is it our job? What role can white people play in telling these stories?

Excerpt of EDI Training for LIU Post Theatre Dept. Season Committee
11.20.20

Dismantling The Master's Playhouse: An Examination On EDI In The Theatre.
Inspired by Audre Lorde's *The Master's Tools Will Not Dismantle The Master's House* (1984)

Workshop By Nigel Semaj

When I think of things that have been seminal to my work and research in equity, diversity, and inclusion, I think of the late Audre Lorde and her writings.

More specifically, I think of her essay "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," which she wrote and published in 1984.

In this article, she asks, "What does it mean when the tools of an oppressive system are used to examine the fruits of that same system?"

It was then that I realized that my education had only provided me with the master's tools for the most part. I had been taught to use the same tools used historically to oppress marginalized communities. So how was I to begin to dismantle systems of racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, and more without the proper tools?

I wanted to share with you how I have governed my movement work thus far.

I first had to define the dreaded word diversity, which capitalist systems and corporations have colonized for a long time. Still, as Audre Lorde talks about in her discussions on unity, and what Angela Davis has quoted so eloquently, diversity sometimes means integrating different-looking people into a system that remains the same. Difference that does not make a difference/difference that is not allowed to do its work.

So, what exactly is Diversity?

Diversity is a numbers game. It is the quantitative representation of differences. It is a measurement. It is how many different identities/experiences make up a space, a room, a university department, governing board, etc.

Diversity, yes, is important. It is the first step to getting people and their various identities and intersectionalities into a room. However, if the system they are brought into remains the same, their presence and subsequent work done in those systems will result in tokenism and exploitation.

That's where Inclusion comes into play. And Inclusion is the *qualitative* representation of differences. It is how people can bring who they are into their interactions.

So, we have numbers, and then we have the quality of experience.

Excerpt of EDI Training for LIU Post Theatre Dept. Season Committee
11.20.20

However, these two things will not be allowed to do their work if equity is not present. Now we talk about equity because equality does not recognize inclusion. It does not recognize the *differences* in *experience*. Equality says that everyone gets the “same.” There is a famous photo of equality vs. equity that I have put into the document below.

Equity is the process of recognizing the historical legacies and current realities of discrimination and prejudice that people from marginalized communities experience. It is recognizing that not everyone starts at GO with 200 dollars.

The presence of all of these equity, diversity, *and* inclusion begins to dismantle systems of oppression and create new models and systems of governance.

So, why is this important for me to bring to this committee? In our work in theatre, we aim to be diverse without thinking about inclusion and equity. That is what has historically been done. However, this committee must do the work and recognize the above. It is making sure that we are not just filling a season with diverse shows but that we are filling a season with opportunities for a diverse team of people (cast, crew, and production team) to experience equity and inclusion in the workspace and other creative spaces.

What that looks like is queer performers being able to bring their experiences and identities to queer roles. It is Black stories being told by Black bodies, not just in actors’ roles but also in designers and directors. This is not just about numbers; it has to be about *experience*. That is how we grow.

It is not just about asking who wrote this story, but asking what their life experience in writing this story is. This is not to say that people outside of a community cannot tell its history - it is asking why not invest in people who come from a community and the people who made the history to tell it. It is not just asking what are the bodies needed to tell this story, but what experiences are needed to tell this story, and how can we invest in an experience where a queer person, or a person of color, or female-identified persons, and more can truthfully embody their life experience on the stage.

Additionally, we often ask the grand all question, what is this story about? And we sometimes (I know I have) forget to ask who this story is for.

Jordan E. Cooper, in a speech on queer futures, says a queer future to him looks like by us, for us. W.E.B. Du Bois stated that Black theatre is about us, for us, by us, and near us. - (*See Articles II and III for both speeches*)

I see the above work as redefining systems and contributing to changing the world. Which is a mighty task. I see the above work as using tools outside the master’s toolbox to dismantle not only his home but also his Playhouse.