New York University-Gallatin
Playwriting – 4 Credits
Tuesdays 6:20-9:00
Myla Churchill, Instructor

Course Description:
Through a series of exercises, we will discover how environment and experience influence identity; how plot is built on desire and need; and why perception and cultural context dictate the form or structure of a play. By examining classical paradigms and their influence on modern theatre, we can determine how to use or break the rules to find our own voices. As we mine our souls and surroundings for the seeds of creation, we will write a one-act play. Students will be evaluated not only on the quality of their work, but on their eagerness to learn and willingness to constructively aid others in the creative process.

Course Requirements:
- Timely completion of reading and writing assignments.
- One grade point reduction per day unless absence is excused.
- All non-journal assignments must be word processed
- Oral presentation of written assignments
- Completion of creative discovery exercises
- Completion of a first act or one-act play in script format (30-50pgs)
- See a play (Date TBD)

Grading Criteria:
Reading/Writing Assignments: 25%
Midterm: 25%
Class Participation/Peer Evals: 25%
Play: 25%

Plays & Books: (Can be purchased @ Shakespeare)
Aristotle’s Poetics, Francis Fergusson’s translation
Master Harold and the Boys, by Athol Fugard
No Exit, by Jean-Paul Satre & Fun, by Howard Korder
A Doll’s House, by Henrik Ibsen & MUD, by Marie Irene Fornes

Suggested Websites:
oneactplays.net
Resource Tools:
One Composition Notebook
Laptop
Two-Pocket Folder
Final Draft/Screenwriter/Celtx/Word
Thumb Drive/Passport

This is a class of original work so plagiarism is a non-issue, right?!

**Session One: 9/4**
Introductions and course overview. In-class writing: *Triumph & Tragedy!*
Chronicle two stories, where you mattered and where you were marginalized.

**Homework:** Read: Ch. 6 in Aristotle’s *Poetics*. Write: Think back and write a one-page sensory description of the house you grew up in. Don’t explain! Use all five senses to paint a picture of what your life was like.

**Session Two: 9/11**
Decode *Poetics*. Share sensory descriptions and discuss how to create the “Where” on stage.

**Homework:** A Picture’s Worth… Get inside the mind of one person in your postcard/picture and write an “inner story” monologue. Read *Master Harold and the Boys* and Fugard’s journal entries. Bring composition notebooks to class.

**Session Three: 9/18**
Share and turn in “inner story” monologues with pix. Discuss *Master Harold*, relationships, subtext and the process of reflection in writing.

**Homework:**
Life Detective. Fill in the blanks of your life. Then choose a sentence from the life detective exercise and develop an “unrequited desire” monologue for your protagonist. Read *No Exit & Fun.*
**Session Four: 9/25**
Share “unrequited desire” monologue. Discuss *No Exit & Fun* and review one-act structure.

**Homework:** Read *A Doll’s House & MUD*. Notate similarities and differences. Bring your laptop to next class.

**Session Five: 10/2**
Introduce script format. Discuss *A Doll’s House & MUD* and character’s arc & reversals.

**Homework:** Who, Where, What? Who are the characters? Where is the place? What is the dominant emotional image? Bring your laptop.

**Midterm:** Answer the character bio questions for your protagonist and antagonist (or another character). Map out a story outline for your play and your character/set descriptions. **No one word answers or descriptions. You have two weeks.**

**Session Six: 10/9**

**Homework:** Write first 10 pages of your play and email them to your group. Write evals for your group mates.

**Session Seven: 10/23**
Turn in Midterm. Table Reads. Bring enough copies for characters and narrator.

**Homework:** Pages. Written evals.

**Session Eight: 10/30**
Workshop pages in your groups. Individual Consultations. Happy Halloween!

**Homework:** Pages. Written evals.
**Session Nine: 11/6**  
Independent Study. Vote, Vote, Vote!

**Homework:** Pages. Write & email evals.

**Session Ten: 11/13**  
Workshop pages in your group. Discuss Author’s Notes.

**Homework:** Finish your First Draft!

**Session Eleven: 11/20**  
First Draft Table Reads. Office hour consult.

**Homework:** Revision!

**Session Twelve: 11/27**  
First Draft Table Reads. Office hour consult.

**Homework:** Revision!

**Session Thirteen: 12/4**  
First Draft Table Reads. Office hour consult.

**Homework:** Revision!

**Session Fourteen: 12/11**  
Last day of class! Turn in your Final Draft Celebration!