

THEA/WAGS0206 Fall 2012
Contemporary Woman Playwrights
Cheryl Faraone

T/H 1;30-2:45
MCA 232

This class will study the concerns addressed by women's voices in the theatre over the past forty years, the varieties of dramaturgical and theatrical strategies employed by these writers, and, inevitably, the current position of women in theatre. Some of the topics explored in these works include collective expression and creation theatre and political expression race and class

and the exploration of the domestic and realm in women's plays. The phrase "the personal is political" will be studied through all the works. The works are grouped chronologically and thematically (though there are many overlaps).

The plays will be examined for literary structure and, more crucially, for how they achieve their effects by theatrical means. The class will be discussion, lecture and some performance, to better illuminate the works as they are experienced. The focus will be primarily on text, though some theory will be introduced at the outset of the class and will be referenced throughout.

TEXTS available in bookstore except for those *

Plays: *Vinegar Tom, A Number, Far Away, Love and Information***Seven Jewish Children** (Caryl Churchill)

The Grace of Mary Traverse (Timberlake Wertenbaker)

Funnyhouse of a Negro & A Movie Star has to Star in Black and White (Adrienne Kennedy)

How I Learned to Drive (Paula Vogel)

One Flea Spare & Slaughter City (Naomi Wallace (*In the Heart of America and Other Plays*))

Perfect Pie (Judith Thompson)

God's Ear (Jenny Schwartz)

Passion Play (Sarah Ruhl)

Tusk Tusk (Polly Stenham)

Enron (Lucy Preble)

The Shipment (Young Jean Lee)

for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf (Ntoake Shange)

Nine Parts of Desire (Heather Raffo)

Additional material: *PEOPLE WHO LED TO MY PLAYS* (Adrienne Kennedy)

Scanned material: sections of *Feminist Theatre* (Helene Keyssar) and *Feminism in Theatre* (Sue Ellen Case), various additional articles

Since the class will be very fast moving, covering 2+ plays per week, attendance is extremely important and will be a factor in grading. Many plays will be discussed in

relation to each other. The midterm exam will be a series of presentations and readings, using class format on new material.
Final assignment: A collectively created (groups of no more than 4) theatre piece, to be presented in final exam period

WRITING SECTION: one additional 45 minute meeting a week, TBD

CLASS CALENDAR

September

- 11 Introduction to class "Advice to a Playwright"
- 13 Keyssar scanned material and
"Social Change, Artistic Ferment"

THE PLAYS

-FOCUS: PERSONAL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL, SEXUAL

- 18 VINEGAR TOM (Churchill)
- 20 continue; read/discuss Case, Chapter 1 -- Shakespeare reading
- 25 HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE (Vogel)
- 27 'Driving Ms. Vogel' : interview by David Savran + "Paula Vogel: an interview by Alexis Greene"

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 2012: SPECIAL EVENT

At UVM:

1:00 pm "Women in Theatre: Transcending Barriers"

Panel Discussion in the Royall Tyler Theatre

3:00 pm Reception

4:00 pm Keynote Speech by Paula Vogel

***7:30 pm Performance - How I Learned to Drive at UVM
(class trip..)***

October

- 2 ONE FLEA SPARE Naomi Wallace
- 4 SLAUGHTER CITY Wallace "Naomi Wallace: an interview by Alexis Greene"
- 9 THE GRACE OF MARY TRAVERSE Timberlake Wertenbaker
- 11 video, Padma Ventakaramen, India "Voicing Silence" Theatre company/
read A NUMBER and FAR AWAY (Churchill*)
- 16 Fall Break *read People who led to my Plays, Adrienne Kennedy*

FOCUS: RACE, CLASS AND ETHNICITY

18 FUNNYHOUSE OF A NEGRO & A MOVIE STAR HAS TO STAR IN BLACK AND WHITE (Adrienne Kennedy)

23 continue Kennedy (**take home midterm**)

25 *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* (Ntosake Shange)

30 SEVEN JEWISH CHILDREN (Churchill) – available online
(and LOVE AND INFORMATION-Churchill)

November

1 THE SHIPMENT (Young Jean Lee)

6 midterm project: SUZAN LORI PARKS' 365 days, 365 plays+ **take home midterm due**

8 NINE PARTS OF DESIRE (Heather Raffo)

13 PERFECT PIE (Judith Thompson) + Thompson interview

FOCUS; 21ST CENTURY VOICES, FAMILY, SPIRITUALITY AND WORKPLACE

15 ENRON Lucy Preble and Introduction to Sarah Kane

20 NO CLASS read 'Navigating Postfeminism' from FEMINIST FUTURES
THANKSGIVING

27 introduction to final project and PASSION PLAY Sarah Ruhl

29 GOD'S EAR (Jenny Schwartz)

DECEMBER

4 TUSK, TUSK (Polly Stenham)

6 wrap-up

YOU WILL GREATLY HELP YOURSELF IF YOU ARE ALWAYS ONE PLAY AHEAD; SINCE THE WORKS OFTEN SPILL INTO EACH OTHER, REFERENCING BACK AND FORWARD WILL BE A FREQUENT OCCURRENCE.

Viewing assignments: How I learned to Drive, UVM and tbd

Special event: Women in Theatre symposium UVM, September 29

GRADING:

35% class attendance and participation/30% midterm/35% final project/paper

