

English 251: Playwriting
American University of Beirut
Fall 2021

Lecturer: Prof. Milia Ayache
Contact: ma364@aub.edu.lb
Meeting time:
Office/Hours: By appointment

This class is a reading/writing-intensive workshop-style introduction to playwriting. We will discuss the following questions over the course of the semester: What makes a play? What are the elements of a play? What is the difference between writing for theatre and writing for film? *Why* even write a play? What source-material or life events inspire writing for the stage? What makes theatre relevant in the world and in Lebanon?

OBJECTIVES

- *To generate messy material that will serve as fodder for your plays.
- *To learn to write and edit short/full-length plays.
- *To learn to offer constructive and helpful criticism to your peers.

HOW?

- *By participating in theater exercises, keeping a writing journal, and seeing as much theatre as possible.
- *By dissecting the elements of play.
- *By work-shopping each others' work.

REQUIRED READING

I will provide the textbook and all the plays to be read over the semester. Y Say what do you think of that? An AUB class that doesn't make you pay an extra tuition for books? Thank me later. (I put this in all of my syllabi.) All readings will be available on Discord.

REQUIRED VIEWING:

~~You are required to see **five** live plays over the course of the semester and turn in reflections on the performances. I will offer suggestions of plays to see and propose dates, but ultimately, what you see and when you see it (as long as I deem it a valid theatrical experience) is dependent on you. You must, therefore, ask me for clearance concerning any performances you want to see and about which you want to write. For instance, filmed plays will not count whereas a dance performance might count.~~

~~A reflection is a **500-word paper** in which you will critically approach the performance. It is helpful to bring a **journal** along with you to take notes during the show, during the intermission, or fresh after the show. Attached to every reflection will be the **ticket stub** and — if available — the program.~~

GRADING

Playwriting exercises: 50%

Participation: 20%

Final Play: 30%

POLICIES

*Do not sleep, text, watch videos during class.

*Class starts on time.

*Work is due on the due date. I will not accept excuses and I do not allow makeups. Just do the work and submit it on time.

*All work must be typed and handed in by the due date.

*Font must be: Times New Roman, 12pt, normal margins (unlike what I used here in this syllabus), and must follow the given formatting of the play.

*You must be ready to discuss the assigned readings. If you are unprepared, I will mark you as absent.

*Use Discord for all digital communication.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Introductions. What is Theatre? Introducing the Etude.

Week 2: Investigating the Etude.

Week 3: Adaptation.

Week 4: Readings of adaptations

Week 5: Dialogue. Overheard Conversations due.

Week 7: Understanding Readings on Theatre

Week 8: Short Plays

Week 9: Workshopping. Final draft due.

Week 10: Video Games and Theatre

Week 11: Movies and Theatre

Week 12: Final Play Idea Bakeoff

Week 13 and 14: Workshopping Final Plays. Final due: Thursday, May 7th.

*Plagiarism: The AUB Student Handbook describes plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism exists when students claim as their own the work of others. Students who fail to credit properly ideas or materials taken from another, commit plagiarism. Putting your name on a piece of work any part of which is not yours constitutes plagiarism, unless that piece is clearly marked and the work from which you have borrowed is fully identified. Plagiarism is a violation of the University academic regulations and is subject to disciplinary action. If you plagiarize intentionally, you will fail the course. If you plagiarize unintentionally, you will fail the course.

*Finally, please read AUB's Student Code of Conduct. This class should be a safe space devoid of physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual violence so that we may read and write plays full of physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual violence