Winter Quarter 2011
Dr. Theresa May
Phone: 541 346-1789
Email: tmay33@uoregon.edu
Office: Villard Hall 207
Office hours:  Tues. 10:30-12:30pm; Th. 2:30-3:30pm; or by appointment

TA 472/572 – Multicultural Theatre Seminar
LATINO/A THEATRE & DRAMA OF NORTH AMERICA
Monday/Wednesday  2-3:50 pm

Overview: TA 472 Latino/a Theatre & Drama of North America is a survey of contemporary drama both as literature and as blueprint for performance. Students will emerge from this class with a greater understanding and appreciation of drama written by Mexican-American, Cuban-American, and other authors who self-identify as Latino/a, Chicano/a, and/or Hispanic. Students will develop tools and skills for analyzing and discussing dramatic literature, and for critically evaluating differences across texts. We will study how cultural traditions and political histories have informed the many different ways in playwrights represent American communities. We will also study how the works of these authors expose race, class and gender stereotypes, and call into question the universalizing idea of the nation-state. We also will look closely at how these playwrights use theatrical form (such as magical realism, parody, song, ritual) to critique and/or enlighten contemporary North American culture. We will read plays from across North American that demonstrate a variety of literary and performance styles, themes and viewpoints. We will read these texts not merely as literature, but as civic documents that illuminate diverse lives, perspectives and concerns of Americans. The course fulfills the University’s GE Multicultural requirements in American Society.

Objectives:
Students will:
a) Become familiar with the achievements of a number of prominent playwrights and performance companies.
b) Understand some of the political-historical “back-story” of these diverse plays and performances.
c) Learn to read drama both as a literary text and as schemata for live performance.
d) Explore in oral, visual, and written discussion how these texts work as socio-cultural and political documents.
e) Learn to identify and discuss different themes across a range of plays, including how those themes emerge in theatre for young audiences, as well as mature audiences.
f) Learn to identify and discuss a variety of theatrical means used by Latino/a playwrights such as: magical realism, storytelling, song, ritual, and parody.
g) Develop a critical and theatrical vocabulary for writing and speaking about these works and the human experiences they illuminate.
h) Strengthen oral and written communication skills through classroom discussion, presentations, and written assignments.
i) Strengthen theatrical skills of visual representation, storytelling, dramatic writing, and presentation.
Readings/Books
You are welcome to share books with someone else in the class. However, you are responsible for the reading on the day it is assigned, and for having the play in hand for discussion. All of these have been ordered through the UO Duckstore coursebooks section. You may also find many of them used or less expensive at Smith Family bookstore, or online.

Ordered as “Required”
Primary Texts
○ Elizabeth C. Ramirez. *Chicanas/Latinas in American Theatre*.
○ José Cruz González & Jennings, (editor). *Nine Plays by José Cruz González*.
○ Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiz*.

Plays
○ Luiz Valdez. *Zoot Suit and Other Plays*.
○ Cherrie Moraga. *Heroes and Saints & Other Plays*.
○ José Rivera. *Marisol and Other Plays*.
○ Nilo Cruz. *Two Sisters and a Piano and Other Plays*.
○ Milcha Sanchez Scott. *Roosters*.
○ Richard Montoya & Culture Clash. *American Night: The Ballad of Juan Jose*. (you must get this through the Oregon Shakespeare Festival bookstore):

Ordered as “Recommended”
(We will read certain excerpts from both.)
○ Jorge Huerta. *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms*.
○ Jorge Huerta. *Chicano Theater: Performance, Society and Myth*

Grads only: you will have other reading in addition to the above. We will determine those readings together at our first meeting.

Assignments
In addition to reading assignments….

Visual and written response to plays = Visual response scrapbook

The art of theatre is a visual art; while it used words in the form of dialogue, it only comes alive in space. We will read many plays of style known as “magical realism” in which visual, aural and tactical images carry the central themes and meanings of the play. Rather than always responding to these plays intellectually, this assignment is designed to allow you to respond through the language of images. Each week you will bring to class a visual/image response to one of the plays assigned that week. This can be in the form of a collage of images, an original work of art you make, photographs or video that you shoot, music that you compose or collect. Your response should communicate what for you were the primary feelings, moods, issues, events, and meanings of the play. The response is not an illustration, and it is not a scenic design; rather it is a work of art that speaks about and back to the play. Your images should be accompanied by some written collection of lines, words, or phrases from the play text.
Dramatic writing assignments based on *Crossing Over*

One of the texts we will read is a first-person narrative account of one family of migrant workers from Mexico. The entire class will read two of the chapters in this book; the remainder will be read divided up among the whole class. (You’re welcome and encouraged to read the entire book if you like!) Working with a partner, you will be responsible for adapting two chapters from this book into dramatic scenes. I will provide a series of development steps that will take you through the process of adapting translating your chapter from narrative prose to drama. Note the Due Dates in the Calendar for various steps including, idea gathering to rough draft and revisions. At the end of the term we will, as a class, host a reading of our play adaptation of *Crossing Over* in the Pocket Theatre.

**Blackboard** will be used for this class. Plan on checking Blackboard frequently for assignments or class announcements.

**Course Expectations/Requirements:**
- Demonstrated preparation (i.e., doing reading and active contribution to class)
- Active class discussion and participation
- Visual and written response assignments (see below)
- Dramatic writing assignments based on *Crossing Over* (see below)
- Mid-term and Final exam essays
- Participation in final class presentation
- Collaborative approach to learning and respect for others’ viewpoints and experience

Please see the **Course Calendar for all Due Dates**. All requirements must be fulfilled in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

**TA 472 Grading**

I use letter grades. **You can calculate your grade by translating letter grades into a 4.0 scale. Each of the following six assignment/s weighs equally:**
- Class participation: active discussion, demonstration of preparation, contribution to class, adaptation and presentation of *Crossing Over*
- Visual response scrapbook (collected at mid-term and end of term)
- Dramatic writing assignment (includes idea generation, draft, and revisions) of *Crossing Over* #1 (prior to mid-term)
- Dramatic writing assignment (includes idea generation, draft, and revisions) of *Crossing Over* #2 (prior to finals week)
- Mid-term essay
- Final essay

**Grading Criteria:**

A Displays a thorough understanding of course concepts and is able to utilize these concepts in creative ways. Writing and oral work is clear, well-crafted, and insightful. Makes statements or asks questions in discussion that shape the class period in meaningful ways.

B Written and oral work displays a concerted effort to grapple with the course ideas and shows a good factual understanding of material. Discussion participation is active and thoughtful.

C Written and oral work meets the basic demands of the assignment but achieves no more.
Some confusion or lack of facility in the attack of course concepts. Discussion attendance is good, but active participation is sporadic.

**D** Written and oral work lacks accuracy and focus. Discussion attendance is poor and participation rare.

**F** Written and oral work is incomplete, not addressed to the assigned topic, or not turned in at all. Discussion attendance and participation are extremely poor.

**Attendance:** Absences will be excused for documented illness, school-sponsored activities (KCACTF), true emergency situations, and required participation in significant cultural responsibilities in student’s community. Documented illness requires a doctor’s or health center statement and does not include appointments that can be made at other times. Missing class for either excused or unexcused absences may adversely impact the overall grade in the course based on the percentage of grade or points earned by attendance and participation in class as identified in the course syllabus. More than 2 unexcused absences will lower your final grade by a half grade point (an A drops to a B+) for each absence.

**Misc Policies**

I hope to get to know each of you individually – what concerns you as students, what impassions you as artists. Please feel free to visit my office to chat. Office hours are at the top of the syllabus.

All work must be completed according to directions, on time, and presented in a professional manner. If you have a problem meeting a deadline, please talk to me. I expect you to treat one another and me in a professional manner, and to treat our class as a professional association. I expect you to articulate your point of view within a context of mutual respect for another’s views and experience. I expect those of you who know you discuss easily (and perhaps loudly) to make this class a safe space for everyone to express their thoughts. Your classmates are a primary source of your learning.

Smoking on campus is limited to Smoking Stations only. Please consult the University Student Handbook for regulations regarding alcohol, drugs, etc. Using substances before or during class or rehearsal is cause for a failing grade in the course.

Plagiarism means using the written, spoken, or electronic words of someone else and not giving them credit. This includes all information on the internet including open-source or non-identified author information. Plagiarism is grounds for failure on the assignment and/or a failing grade in the course. Cheating or plagiarism on tests, examinations, papers, and other course assignments will earn an F on the assignment and possibly an F in the course. Plagiarism is the appropriation or imitation of the language or ideas of another person and presenting them as one’s original work. Although this sometimes occurs through carelessness or ignorance, this does not make it less serious. If you are uncertain about how to properly document your sources, please see me for guidance.

Any student in this course who has documented special needs that may prevent the fullest expression of his/her abilities or which could hinder full participation in class activities should contact me as soon as possible, so we can discuss appropriate accommodations necessary to complete your course requirements. You may be eligible for a note-taker or other assistance. The University has many useful systems and tools in place to empower and aid your learning. Please come and see me, or call Student Life at 346-3216, or Disability Services at 346-1155.