“The purpose of art is to lay bare the questions that have been hidden by the answers.”
-James Baldwin

“My mother and father were always pushing me away from secondhand answers—even the answers they themselves believed. I don’t know that I have ever found any satisfactory answers of my own. But every time I ask it, the question is refined. That is the best of what the old heads meant when they spoke of being ‘politically conscious’—as much a series of actions as a state of being, a constant questioning, questioning as ritual, questioning as exploration rather than the search for certainty.”
-Ta-Nehisi Coates

“If I didn’t define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people’s fantasies for me and eaten alive.”
-Audre Lorde

“Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them... Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.”
-Rainer Maria Rilke

TERM: Autumn 2018
CREDITS: 3
LEVEL: U
CLASS TIME: Wed & Fri, 12:45-2:05 PM
LOCATION: Drake 2068

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Elizabeth Wellman
OFFICE: Drake 2052
OFFICE EMAIL: wellman.58@osu.edu
OFFICE PHONE: (614) 688-4683
OFFICE HOURS: T, 1-3 PM, W, 12-12:30, or by appt

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course, we will explore a wide ranging variety of theatre and performance created by African-American artists that spans from the early nineteenth century to the contemporary moment, through the lens of several significant thinkers and writers like Audre Lorde, bell hooks, James Baldwin, and Ta-Nehisi Coates as they have reflected on black identity and experience in contemporary life and art. For the first fourth of the semester, we will juxtapose contemporary screenings with these writers. We will then move somewhat chronologically through a number of theatre and performance pieces up to the present day. We will meet guest artists, attend live performances, and visit exhibits. Along the way, we will engage questions about privilege, class, sexuality, gender identity, religion, and ability as they intersect with questions about race. We will also consider the writing and teaching of history and the canonization of art. Ultimately, this course asks us to consider the nature of representation in story-telling: Who tells the story? Why does this matter? How is power reinforced, resisted, subverted, or transformed by the telling and re-telling that occurs on stage?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- To develop and refine writing techniques and skills.
- To examine dramatic texts, the society which produced the writers, the social context within which audiences gather, and the role that theatre has played within African American culture.
- To offer a richer understanding of how African Americans have regarded themselves in the past, and how current images project in theatrical entertainment.
- To develop and use critical tools for thinking about diversity, entertainment, and power relations between historically dominant and marginalized groups in the United States.
GENERAL EDUCATION:
Writing and Communication 2
GOALS: Students are skilled in written communication and expression, reading, critical thinking, oral expression and visual expression.

Expected Learning Outcomes:
1. Through critical analysis, discussion, and writing, students extend the ability to read carefully and express ideas effectively.
2. Students apply written, oral, and visual communication skills and conventions of academic discourse to the challenges of a specific discipline.
3. Students access and use information critically and analytically.

Social Diversity in the United States
GOALS: Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

Expected Learning Outcomes:
1. Students describe and evaluate the roles of such categories as race, gender and sexuality, disability, class, ethnicity and religion in the pluralistic institutions and cultures of the United States.
2. Students recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values regarding appreciation, tolerance, and equality of others.

TEACHING METHOD: This course will include lecture, discussions, film screenings, and writing/collaborative activities.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Available at all campus bookstores and online:
Coates, Ta-Nehisi. Between the World and Me.
Jacobs-Jenkins, Branden. Appropriate.
Udofia, Mfoniso. Sojourners.

Available on Carmen/library e-book:
Brown, Carlyle. The African Company Presents Richard III.
Change, Jeff. Complex Movements’ Beware of the Dandelions.
George-Graves, Nadine. The Royalty of Negro Vaudeville: The Whitman Sisters and the Negotiation of Race, Gender, and Class in African American Theater, 1900-1940. (Excerpt)
hooks, bell. Black Looks. (Excerpt)
Lorde, Audre. Sister Outsider. (Excerpt)
Maroon Arts Group. Inside the Riot.
Mitchell, Koritha. Living with Lynching. (Excerpt)
Wilson, August. “The Ground On Which I Stand.”; The Piano Lesson

SCREENINGS: (In-class or online)
Baldwin, James. I Am Not Your Negro.
Baraka, Amiri. The Dutchman.
Beyoncé. Lemonade.
Nwandu, Antoinette. Pass Over.
Okpokwasili, Okwui. Bronx Gothic.
Smith, Anna Deavere. Notes from the Field.
LIVE PERFORMANCES:
André Zachery/Renegade Performance Group/Untamed Space
Wexner Center for the Arts
Sept 27-30 ($12, Reserve Ticket in-person or here: https://wexarts.org/performing-arts/andre-m-zachery-renegade-performance-group)

She, Too, Sings America Festival / Lab Series/New Works Lab: Drake 2060
October 8-11, 7 PM (Free, Reserve Ticket beginning at 6 PM each night)

Carlyle Brown/Acting Black: Demystifying Racism
Wexner Center for the Arts & Department of Theatre
October 15, 7 PM (Free, Reserve Ticket here: https://www.wexarts.org/talks-more/carlyle-brown)

EXHIBITS:
I, Too, Sing America: The Harlem Renaissance at 100
Columbus Museum of Art
Opens October 19
(Free admission with OSU D-Tix or Free admission for all on Sundays)

ASSIGNMENTS: All written assignments must be typed (double-spaced, 1” margins, in a legible 12 pt font). The papers will follow MLA style guidelines. Visit https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/ for a detailed MLA style guide. Each student is responsible for knowing and using correct citation, formatting, etc. All assignments will be submitted electronically via Carmen in a Word document or PDF file format. NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY EMAIL, NO EXCEPTIONS.

RESEARCH & WRITING PRACTICE ASSIGNMENTS: Early in the semester, there will be 2 short research assignments in-class, designed to develop your reading comprehension of the material, strengthen your ideas about topics discussed in class, and explore your writing and critical thinking skills. These are evaluated based on participation and effort.

POP QUIZZES: (21 pts) Over the course of the semester, there will be pop quizzes based on your assigned readings/screenings. Tips: Read and watch for the big ideas and main arguments. Take notes on important terminology and vocabulary. Stay active. Pop quizzes are given at the beginning of class. Please be prompt in attendance in order not to miss quizzes. No quizzes may be made up without documentation of an approved excused absence. 7 quizzes X 3 pts each = 21 pts total.

PEER TEACHING DAYS: (18 pts) As part of our study of the Harlem Renaissance, 6 groups of students will work together to create a 3-5 minute video presentation focused on an artist from the sign-up list on Carmen. Each member of each group must speak in the video and contribute to its making. You are welcome to be creative in your approach, use of digital technology, and structure. In your presentation, please be sure to give a brief biography including their major works or contributions. You may also consider using video clips or visuals of the artist’s work, along with significant quotes, reviews, or other research materials. You must cite all sources, including images, film, and sound, for this presentation in a formal work cited bibliography. Submit both your video and your bibliography to the Carmen Dropbox by the stated deadline. Be sure to troubleshoot your video tech in advance and upload in a format that can be downloaded by your instructor. You will present your video in class. Each member of each group will also submit an independent peer review sheet to a separate Carmen Dropbox, supporting efforts to make group workload equitable for all students.

WRITING PORTFOLIO: Over the first 12 weeks of the course, you will complete 3 writing assignments, each designed to help students practice a key writing skill. By November 28th (Week 15), each student will have received feedback on all of those assignments. They will revise and re-submit the 3 assignments as a single portfolio document by the day of the schedule final for this course. This project is designed to emphasize writing as a process, not just a finished product. See below for detailed instructions for each of the 3 assignments. All assignments are due electronically to Carmen, unless otherwise noted.
**Writing Assignment #1** 10 pts total (WA1 + Writing Journal) Selecting a single quote from either the Coates or hooks reading, write an essay applying its significance as way of interpreting or deepening our understanding of a single piece of work from contemporary (2000-present) black performance (this can be interpreted broadly and include hip-hop, rap, dance, poetry, television, performance art, or theatre). Draw clear connections and offer specific examples in your analysis. Include writing journal reflection at end of document. (350-550 words) DUE: 9/12

**Writing Assignment #2** 12 pts total (WA2 + Writing Journal) Write an essay exploring an element of intersectionality as it addressed in 1-2 plays we have read or will read this semester. Consider comparing/contrasting treatment of that element between 2 plays, between 2 characters, etc. Use specific examples from the text to demonstrate your point. Your essay must do more than merely summarize and list commonalities in plot or concept. Include writing journal reflection at end of document. (500-700 words) DUE: 10/5

**Writing Assignment #3** 15 pts total (WA3 + Writing Journal) Write an essay exploring one of the three live performances you saw this semester through the lens of one of the writers we read during the first month of class (Baldwin, Lorde, hooks, or Coates). Include writing journal reflection at end of document. (600-800 words) DUE: 11/9

**Writing Journal**  
200-250 word reflection on the first draft of each writing assignment  
200-250 word reflection on each piece of writing feedback received (both via instructor and peer response)  
200-250 word response summarizing changes made to EACH writing assignment in revised writing portfolio

A note on writing assignment grades: *First* submission of each of these assignments is assessed based on 1) following the essential assignment parameters (page length, formatting, answering the prompts/questions/etc.), and 2) submission according to course standards (via Carmen dropbox unless otherwise noted, on time or early). *Second* submission of this group of writing assignments (your revised writing portfolio) will be assessed based on 1) the detailed writing rubric attached to the final portfolio dropbox (also available under Carmen modules), and 2) thoughtful application of instructor/peer feedback for revision. Missed or late writing assignments from the first submission may be submitted for a grade in the second submission, however: they will only count for the revised writing portfolio grade and will be evaluated based on the rubric, without the benefit of instructor/peer feedback for revision.

Revised Writing Portfolio: (25 pts) Revise and re-submit all 3 writing assignments in one document by the listed due date. Remember to apply feedback and include your writing journal reflection on each piece of feedback and summarizing changes made to each assignment. See above for grading criteria.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** There is 1 opportunity to receive extra credit this semester. There will be NO other extra credit opportunities this semester.

Opportunity: Schedule and attend a short meeting with me during my office hours. This is a great practice for getting to know your professors and accessing academic support early in the term. In order to receive credit, you must schedule and confirm your meeting in advance by email and attend promptly during my office hours on or before Week 7. Note: If you are not able to visit during my scheduled office hours, I am available on a limited basis by appointment – just email and ask. Worth 3 points.

**GRADING:**  
Attendance................................................................................. 28pts  
Participation................................................................................ 28pts  
Pop Quizzes.................................................................................. 21pts  
Peer Teaching Video................................................................. 18pts  
Writing Assignment #1.................................................................10pts  
Writing Assignment #2.................................................................12pts  
Writing Assignment #3.................................................................15pts  
Writing Practices.........................................................................10pts
Peer Response #1.........................................................5pts
Peer Response #2.........................................................8pts
Event Attendances.......................................................20pts
Revised Writing Portfolio...........................................25pts
Total.................................................................200pts

Grading Breakdown:
A  200-187 pts  B  173-166 pts  C  153-146 pts  D  126-120 pts
A- 186-180 pts  B- 165-160 pts  C- 145-140 pts  E  119-0 pts
B+ 179-174 pts  C+ 159-154 pts  D+ 139-127 pts

Grading Criteria:
Some significant criteria for the evaluation of written work in the course include:

- Insight and quality of ideas; scope and depth of analysis; persuasive support and development of argument.
- Thoroughness of research and insightful evaluation of findings.
- Clarity, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, and proofreading of written work.

ATTENDANCE: (56 pts total) Attendance and Active Participation are required. Each unexcused absence will result in the loss of attendance and participation points for the day. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in an additional deduction of the final course grade by a third of a letter grade. Each student is granted ONE medical/health absence without documentation. This will not count as an unexcused absence. After one medical/health absence, each medical/health absence requires proper documentation from a healthcare professional or medical provider.

It is possible to attend class and not participate but it is a waste of your time. I encourage you to come to class ready to be fully engaged and present in the material and with each other. Contribute to discussion, ask questions of each other try to imagine ways to apply the material to your own experiences of the world, and share your thoughts with all of us. We all come into the room as experts of our own experience – what a marvelous chance to learn from each other. In order to earn full participation points, come to class on time, stay engaged, ask questions, offer your perspective, and participate fully in discussions/collaborative assignments. Remember that physical presence does not necessarily equal participation.

Excused absences include illness of any minor children for whom you are a parent or primary guardian, military service, family emergencies, illness with documentation from healthcare provider, university-sanctioned absences for academic conferences, athletic competitions, and performing arts productions, and career fairs/job interviews with proper notice and documentation. Unexcused absences include regularly scheduled doctors’ appointments, family vacation, weddings, work schedules, and advisor/financial aid/RA meetings. If you are unsure if your absence would be considered excused or not, please email your instructor in advance, if possible, with clear documentation so that a conversation can be had in a timely manner. All excused absences are at the discretion of your instructor. In the case of an unplanned absence (like illness or emergency) students may make up missed quizzes, assignments, and in-class work within one calendar week of returning to class. In the case of planned absence (like job interviews, conference presentations, and athletic commitments), students may only make up pop quizzes or in-class work (all syllabus-scheduled assignments should be turned in by the due date, regardless of attendance).

In order to receive credit for ANY excused absence, you must download, fill out, and upload the form below to the Carmen Dropbox along with any required documentation. No emailed or hard copies will be accepted. Excused absence documentation is subjective to approval from your instructor and submission of this form does not guarantee excused absence credit or make-up opportunities for course work. https://shs.osu.edu/appointments/absence-excuse/

Each student is granted one grace extension without excused absence documentation. To use this extension, a student must notify the instructor on or before the due date of the assignment that they would like to use their grace extension which grants them an additional 48-hours (beginning at 11:10 AM on the day the assignment was originally due) to complete and submit the assignment. After one grace extension, no late or make-up work will be accepted without appropriate and official documentation of a university-excused absence.
Late Policy: **Arriving after roll call is considered late.** If you have an extenuating circumstance that you expect will regularly impact your ability to arrive on time to class, please let me know ahead of time so that we can have a conversation about it. Students with closely scheduled classes must notify me if they anticipate being late. If you arrive after attendance is taken, you are responsible for checking in with me after class to make sure your attendance is recorded. If you arrive after a pop quiz has been administered, you will not be allowed to make up the quiz without documentation of a legitimate excuse (see excused absence policy for more on university-sanctioned lateness/absence). Arriving more than 20 minutes late is considered absent.

**LEARNING WITH TECHNOLOGY:** As a culture, our use of devices like tablets and phones is constantly shifting. As we venture into new territory with iPad and other digital-learning environments and coursework, let’s practice professional courtesy by silencing notifications and noise-making for all mobile devices during class, unless specifically needed. Please limit or avoid homework for other courses or other distracting mobile device use for both your own benefit and for the benefit of your colleagues. Some class days may be designated as “device-free” and I will ask us all to put our screens away for a period of time.

**COMMUNICATION:** Each of us is responsible for checking and responding promptly to emails. During the weekdays, please allow up to 48 hours for me to respond to your emails. If I have not responded to your communication after 48 hours, please feel free to send me a respectful follow-up. As a member of a world-class university and a young professional, we are all expected to communicate with professionalism and respect amongst each other. Important tips for email: 1) Include a greeting and a signature. Remember that email, even on your phone, is different than text messaging in level of formality. 2) Avoid excessive punctuation and slang. 3) Write with care and thoughtfulness. Be mindful of how you’re feeling when you write an email – it’s easy to forget you’re a person writing to another person when you’re stressed or confused about an assignment or grade. Trust me: I’ve been there. 4) Your emails are very welcome and encouraged but be sure you can’t locate the information in your syllabus or on Carmen (things like office hours, office location, grading policies, and due dates should all be available to you instantly both online and on paper).

**COURSE CONTENT:** Over the course of the semester, we will be dealing directly with sensitive, difficult, potentially triggering and sometimes offensive text, images, and ideas. Our goal is to address and interrogate these images and ideas with care, honesty, and intentionality, understanding that, as scholars and historians, we have a responsibility to acknowledge the American past and present in our research and study. Our job as scholars and thinkers is to challenge ourselves with complex content while being mindful of the experiences of others. To this end, we will approach all material with care and respect, while thinking critically about the ways in which some people within the Afro-American and African Diaspora have used theatre and performance to tell about their experiences.

Without a doubt, the curation and arrangement of our course content is influenced by my own point of view and perspective, which includes being informed by my own privilege (something I was born with and did not earn that continues to allow me access and security that might not be afforded to others). You are invited and encouraged to form your own opinions and critical eye. You do not have to share my aesthetic tastes, politics, values, or beliefs to do well in this course or to be welcome in the room. Higher education is a place to look for nuance and complexity and to challenge our own point of view in a respectful, generous way. This class, however, is, unmistakably, founded on an acknowledgment that racism, sexism, and other intersectional oppressions currently exist and actively contribute to our cultural, social, and economic landscape.

Because of the reality of disparity in terms of white privilege and a wide range of experiences in any university classroom, we will not speak any of the racial slurs we encounter in the text aloud in discussion, though we may hear and read these words within performances and texts from artists we are studying. I acknowledge the complexity of thought around the history of language and recognize also the limited capacity we have to solve these issues in a way that completely eliminates the possibility of oppression and pain. It will be important, as we go, to be mindful of the ways language has shifted historically over time and to take this into consideration as we speak and write about both the past and the present. This is a skill we must all practice. I do not expect us to always get it right but I expect us to try together, not to be politically correct, but to create a classroom that is both brave and conscious.
While it is inherently impossible to make any public space completely “safe”, there are things we can commit to in order to best care for our classroom and campus communities. Working towards safety does not mean that we aren’t interested in engaging with difficult, complex material or that we are afraid to talk with depth and authenticity as we develop our thinking around tough topics. Working towards safety does mean that we create an environment in which we’ve made it possible to lean into complexity and to be intellectually and creatively daring because we’ve committed to looking out for one another. A “safe” classroom won’t always be an easy classroom but it should be a place where we model respect, generosity of spirit, and lean into curiosity about different perspectives and experiences. I encourage you to look for opportunities to learn, to speak with both care and confidence, and to imagine one another complexly.

Some contents of this course may also involve media that may be triggering to some students due to descriptions of and/or scenes depicting acts of violence, acts of war, or sexual violence and its aftermath. If needed, please take care of yourself while watching/reading this material (leaving the classroom to take a water/bathroom break, debriefing with a friend, contacting Counseling and Consultation Services at 614-292-5766, contacting Student Life Disability Services at 292-3307, and contacting the instructor, if needed).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/)

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

THE WRITING CENTER
The Writing Center offers the following free services to members of the OSU community:
• Help with any assignment (ranging from lab reports to dissertations) at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, thesis development, revising, etc.).
• Face-to-face, 50 minute tutorials by appointment at our main location in 4120A Smith Labs, Monday through Friday!
• Online tutoring sessions via CarmenConnect by appointment.
• Walk in appointments at our two satellite locations!
  • Smith-Steeb dorms, Monday-Wednesday, 7-9pm.
  • Thompson library 1st floor, Monday-Thursday, 11am-3pm and 5-7pm.
• Online appointment scheduling, available 24/7.
Please visit http://cstw.osu.edu or call 688-4291 to make an appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE
(Readings should be completed prior to class meeting)
University calendar: http://registrar.osu.edu/staff/bigcalsem.asp

The instructor reserves the right to modify or alter syllabus assignments with prior notice. Each student is responsible for fully reading and following syllabus over the course of the semester.

Week 1: Asking Questions
Wed, Aug 22 Introduction to Class/Syllabus
Fri, Aug 24 IN-CLASS SCREENING: Notes from the Field (2017) – 90 min

Week 2:
Wed, Aug 29 Writing Practice #1
Fri, Aug 31 Between the World and Me
READING DUE: Coates: Between the World and Me (2015)

Week 3:
Wed, Sept 5 IN-CLASS SCREENING: Pass Over by Antoinette Nwandu (2017) – 74 min
Fri, Sept 7 Black Looks (1992)
READING DUE: hooks: “Loving Blackness as Political Resistance,” “Eating the Other,” “Revolutionary Black Women”

Week 4:
Wed, Sept 12 IN-CLASS SCREENING: Bronx Gothic (2017) – 91 min
HOMEWORK DUE: Writing Assignment #1
Fri, Sept 14 The Fire Next Time (1962); Sister Outsider (1976-1984)

Week 5:
Wed, Sept 19 The African Grove
Fri, Sept 21 The African Grove (continued)

Week 6:
Wed, Sept 26 Uncle Tom’s Cabin and Blackface Minstrelsy on the American Stage/Writing Practice #2
Fri, Sept 28  CLASS VISIT to the Theatre Research Institute in Thompson Library

Andre Zachery Performance 9/27-9/30 at the Wexner Center

Week 7:

Wed, Oct 3  Black Vaudeville

Fri, Oct 5  Peer Response
HOMEWORK DUE:  Writing Assignment #2

Week 8

Wed, Oct 10  Lynching Dramas
READING DUE:  Mitchell: “Introduction”

Fri, Oct 12  FALL BREAK

She, Too, Sings America Play Festival 10/8-10/11 at the Lab Series

Week 9:

Wed, Oct 17  The Harlem Renaissance
HOMEWORK DUE:  Peer Teaching Videos In-Class

Fri, Oct 19  GUEST ARTIST: CARLYLE BROWN

Acting Black: Demystifying Racism at the Wexner Center, October 15 at 7 PM

I, Too, Sing America: The Harlem Renaissance at 100 Years opens at the Columbus Museum of Art

Week 10

Wed, Oct 24  Civil Rights
READING DUE:  Hansberry: A Raisin in the Sun (1959)

Fri, Oct 26  The Black Arts Movement
SCREENING DUE:  Baraka: The Dutchman (1964)

Week 11:

Wed, Oct 31  The Pittsburgh Cycle
READING DUE:  Wilson: The Piano Lesson (1990); “The Ground on Which I Stand”

Fri, Nov 2  The Past

Week 12:

Wed, Nov 7  The Future
READING DUE:  Chang: “Complex Movements’ Beware of the Dandelions”

Fri, Nov 9  IN-CLASS SCREENING: Lemonade (2016)
HOMEWORK DUE:  Writing Assignment #3

Week 13:
Wed, Nov 14  
**Reading Due:**  *Lemonade* (continued)


Fri, Nov 14  
Peer Response

---

**Week 14:**

Wed, Nov 21  
Thanksgiving Break

Fri, Nov 23  
Thanksgiving Break

---

**Week 15:**

Wed, Nov 28  
**Guest Artist:** Maroon Arts Group

**Reading Due:**  Maroon Arts Group: *Inside the Riot* (2016)

Fri, Nov 30  
Immigrant and New American Stories

**Reading Due:**  Udofia: *Sojourners* (2016)

---

**Week 16**

Wed, Dec 5  
Wrap-Up Day

---

Revised Writing Portfolio Due Monday, December 10, 4 PM via Carmen