

Preliminary Web Course Description

*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.

School of English and Theatre Studies

Course Code: THST 6320	Course Title: Performance and Difference	Date of Offering: W22
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Course Instructor: D. O'Quinn	Course Format: Seminar
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Brief Course Synopsis:

In a recent interview, playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins observes, "[F]or whatever reason, writing for the theatre has always been rooted in reinterpretation and adaptation. So, actually the roots of what we do has always been the retelling or reframing of stories that exist already, because the success of the theatre is based on the success of a social understanding." This graduate seminar will explore the practice of reinterpretation and adaptation in contemporary theatre with an eye in particular to the types of "social understanding" that are produced with respect to questions of race both in canonical plays and in their twenty-first century successors by playwrights of color. Particular attention will be paid in our discussions to how each play mediates conceptions of race in its time and what types of theatrical forms, technologies, and techniques are used to convey those representations. The general calendar title "Performance and Difference" will be narrowly applied to the performance of blackness across a wide range of British and American plays. Questions of indigeneity will arise in relation to a limited number of scenarios, but for reasons of time and complexity, we will not be addressing cognate forms of social difference and the ascription of alterity.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

Leading the class 10%
Scene analysis 20%
Secondary reading journal 20%
Final essay (proposal 10%, prospectus 20%, final paper 20%) = 50%

Texts and/or Resources Required (e.g. Internet access, specific textbook title, lab kit, etc.)

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Grove Press, 2011)

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, ed. Tiffany Potter (Broadview, 2020)

Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon* (Broadview, 2014)

Lolita Chakrabarti, *Red Velvet*, Second Edition (Methuen/Bloomsbury, 2015)

Keith Hamilton Cobb, *American Moor* (Methuen, 2020)

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, *An Octoroon* (Dramatist Play Service, 2015)

Antoinette Nwandu, *Pass Over* (Grove Press, 2019)

William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. Kim F. Hall (Bedford/St. Martins, 2007)

Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko* ed. Maximillian E. Novak and David Stuart Rhodes (University of Nebraska Press, 2003)

This course counts towards the following distribution requirement(s) for students who registered at the University prior to the Fall of 2018:

Information about mode of delivery (synchronous/asynchronous/other details):

Face to face seminar

*Students who registered at the University of Guelph after Fall 2018 must fulfill the “new” major and minor requirements. Students who registered at the University of Guelph prior to Fall 2018 must fulfill the requirements of the Calendar in effect when they first enrolled unless they have filed a Schedule of Studies Change Request to change to the 2018-2019 calendar. For more information, please consult the major and minor checklists at <https://www.uoguelph.ca/arts/sets/undergraduate/english/current-student-information>.