

**THEATER 130: PLAYWRITING  
FALL 2015**

**INSTRUCTOR: Elise Forier Edie**

**CLASS HOURS: TR 9:35-11:00am**

**OFFICE HOURS: M 12pm-12:50pm, 4:30-6:30pm, T 11am-12pm, W  
12pm-12:50pm, R 11am-12pm (ATA 212) or by appointment  
[forierem@wlaac.edu](mailto:forierem@wlaac.edu)**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces the student to the basic principles and techniques of playwriting. This is a hands-on practical introduction to playwriting.

**TEXTBOOK**

Playwriting: The Structure of Action  
Sam Smiley

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES**

Students will successfully write and rewrite a one-act play, using professional formatting

Students will successfully identify established Western dramatic storytelling techniques and tropes including beginning, middle, end, action, character, complication, inciting incident, crisis, climax and resolution

Students will analyze existing plays scripts for dramatic elements

Students will research and report on current playwriting submission and production opportunities

Students will work cooperatively and collaboratively on small group projects

Students will exercise critical thinking skills by analyzing and critiquing their work and the work of others

**INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Critical Thinking: Evaluation of successful scripts. Analyze positive and negative aspects of a work through group discussion and written critique

Communication: Create effective, compelling plays and scenes.

Self-awareness/Interpersonal Skills: Apply self-awareness strategies as students review and critique scripts.

**Technical Competence:** Use competent technique in writing dramatic and comedic scenes and proper professional format.

**Cultural Diversity:** Respectfully engage with other cultures in an effort to understand them in the collaborative art form of theater.

**Ethics:** Practice and demonstrate standards of personal and professional integrity, honesty and fairness; apply ethical principles in submission of all college work.

**Aesthetics:** Use multiple approaches to produce creative, artistically satisfying scripts and scenes.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

### Class discussion and written work

This is a hands-on class and a majority of your grade will be based on your original writing and your written and oral responses to your classmates' work. Grades will be based on improvement, proficiency, and willingness to participate. If you do not attend class, you will lose points. If you arrive late to class, you will lose points. If you leave class early you will lose points.

### Late Assignments

There are NO late assignments. Students who skip an assignment without making prior arrangements with the instructor will not be allowed to make it up.

### Attendance

Because class discussions and participation in readings are an integral part of this course, attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend every class meeting, to arrive on time and stay throughout the class period. Excessive absenteeism will lower your grade, as will walking in and out of class.

### Walking In and Out of Class

When you arrive to class, make sure you have used the restroom, had a chance to eat, checked your messages, etc. Walking in and out is rude and disruptive. If you need to leave early, or have some other problem, you need to notify me in advance.

### Preparedness

You are expected to arrive on time. You will come to each class session prepared having written your scripts, done required reading and writing assignments, and made enough copies of your work on the day your scripts are due.

### Cell Phones, iPods, etc.

Turn them off and put them away when class begins! Although it may not seem possible, you can survive without talking and texting on your cell phone, or listening to your iPod. Talking and texting on cell phones not only distract you, but they are a distraction for me and your peers.

### Contacting Instructor

E-mail is the best and quickest way to contact me. If you have a problem, do not let it snowball. Contact me immediately. Students are expected to ask questions and obtain help from instructor via email and/or during office hours.

## COLLEGE POLICIES

### Academic Integrity (Plagiarism)

In accordance with code 9803.28, academic dishonesty is prohibited and will not be tolerated in this class. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following actions: cheating on an exam, plagiarism, working together on an assignment, paper or project when the instructor has specifically stated students should not do so, submitting the same term paper to more than one instructor, or allowing another individual to assume one's identity for the purpose of enhancing one's grade. Academic dishonesty of any type, such as cheating or knowingly furnishing false information, by a student provides grounds for disciplinary action by the instructor or college. In written work, no material may be copied from another without proper quotation marks, footnotes, or appropriate documentation.

### Student Conduct

According to code 9803.15, disruption of classes or college activities is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Refer to the catalog and the Standards of Student Conduct in the Schedule of Classes for more information.

### Recording Devices

State law in California prohibits the use of any electronic listening or recording device in a classroom without prior consent of the instructor and college administration. Any student who needs to use electronic aids must secure the consent of the instructor. If the instructor agrees to the request, a notice of consent must be forwarded to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for approval (WLAC College Catalog)

### CAMPUS RESOURCES

As stated earlier in this syllabus, if you are having problems, don't let them snowball. Come and talk with me and check out some of the campus resources available to you.

Office of Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S)  
Heldman Learning Resources Center (HLRC), Room 119 | (310) 287-4450.

West Los Angeles College recognizes and welcomes its responsibility to provide an equal educational opportunity to all disabled individuals. The Office of Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSP&S) has been established to provide support services for all verified disabled students pursuing a college education. DSP&S students may qualify for: priority registration, registration assistance, special parking permits, sign language interpreters and assistive technology (WLAC College Catalog).

Instructional Support (Tutoring) & Learning Skills Center  
Heldman Learning Resources Center (HLRC) | (310) 287-4486  
Improve your reading, language, vocabulary, spelling, math fundamentals and chemistry knowledge with convenient, self-paced computer-aided courses in the Learning Skills Center. Increase your knowledge and learning success: sign up for tutoring in various college subjects (WLAC College Catalog).

### Library Services

Heldman Learning Resources Center (HLRC) | (310) 287-4269 & (310) 287-4486

The WLAC Library provides instruction on how to use the online

catalog, periodical and research databases. In addition to a large collection of books, periodicals and videos the WLAC Library has course textbooks which students may use while in the Library. Web access is available in LIRL as well as meeting rooms. The upper floors provide a beautiful view ideal for study (WLAC College Catalog).

### CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

You are expected to attend classes, be on time, and stay for the entire class

Attendance: 150 points

You are expected to write one ten-minute play in proper format

Ten minute play: 50 points

You are expected to research and present an oral report on a play festival or submission opportunity:

Oral report: 50 points

You are expected to participate in a staged reading of a play, either as an actor or a playwright:

Staged reading: 25 points

You will take a quiz on story elements:

Quiz: 25 points

You will write and rewrite a one act play for your final project:

One act play: 100 points

### GRADE BREAKDOWN

360-400 – A

320-359 – B

280-319 – C

240-279 – D

anything below 240 is an F

Day to day schedule (subject to change)

Tuesday, Sept. 1: Course introductions and policies

What is a script?

What is a play?

Script terminology

Thursday Sept 3: Read and discuss "To Burn a Witch"

Tuesday, Sept 8: Play script format workshop

Thursday, Sept 10: Person, place and problem

Scenes from a hat

HOMEWORK: Write a five to ten page play based on elements pulled from the hat

Tuesday, Sept 15: Read and discuss: "Oh What a Tangled Web"

HOMEWORK: Work on ten minute play

Thursday, Sept 17: Read and discuss: "The Diary of Adam and Eve"

HOMEWORK: Finish ten minute play and bring to class

Tuesday, Sept 22: Read and discuss ten minute plays

Thursday, Sept 24: Read and discuss ten minute plays

Tuesday, Sept 29: Lecture and exercises – plot and story elements

Thursday, Oct 1: Lecture and exercises – plot and story elements

Tuesday, Oct 6: Lecture and exercises – character

HOMEWORK: Begin outline for final project

Tuesday, Oct 8: Read and discuss "I Never Saw Another Butterfly"

Thursday, Oct 10: Read and discuss "Take Five"

Set up meetings to discuss final project

Tuesday, Oct 13: Meet individually with instructor to discuss final project

Thursday, Oct 15: Lecture and exercises – thought

Tuesday, Oct 20: Lecture and exercises – dialogue

Thursday, Oct 22: Lecture and exercises – music

Tuesday, Oct 27: Lecture and exercises – spectacle

Thursday, Oct 29: Workshop plays

Tuesday, Nov 3: Workshop plays

Thursday, Nov 5: Workshop plays

Tuesday, Nov 10: Prepare Staged Readings

Thursday, Nov 12: Prepare Staged Readings

Tuesday, Nov 17: Prepare Staged Readings

Thursday, Nov 19: Perform Staged Readings  
HOMEWORK: Study for Quiz

Tuesday, Nov 24: Quiz on story elements  
HOMEWORK: Prepare oral report

Thursday, Nov 26: NO CLASS, HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Tuesday Dec 1: Meet with Instructor to discuss final rewrites

Thursday, Dec 3: Oral Reports

Tuesday Dec, 8: Oral Reports

Thursday, Dec 10: Final thoughts, wrap up and discussion



Student Acknowledgment  
(Please return this sheet to the instructor)

“I \_\_\_\_\_, have completely read this syllabus and understand and agree to the course requirements.”

Please indicate below, any special needs or circumstances that may have some impact on your work in this class, and for which you may require special accommodations, including but not limited to physical or mental disabilities, inability to arrive in class on time or need to leave class early, observance of religious holidays, etc.

Special needs or circumstances:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_