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ENG 4764-001: Play Writing

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Augusto Boal, in his book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, describes the role of the artist:

Artists are witnesses of their times: they should not [merely] impose on their public their own view of society, their own understanding of human beings, or their own way to make decisions, but after speaking their speech, having their say, giving their testimony, delivering to us the product of their art and craft, they should help others to stimulate inside themselves the artists that lie within, underdeveloped and timid as they may be, shy thoughts still unborn and fragmented, the delicate sensibility that has been blunted. (17)

This is an advanced course in the art and craft of writing plays. In this course, students will:
1. Play games and participate in classroom activities
2. Respond in writing to course material
3. Attend and write about one live performance: *I Don’t Have to Show You No Stinking Badges* by Luis Valdez at Doudna
4. Write plays, some individually, some collaboratively
5. Participate in workshop during class, which includes reading aloud plays
6. Participate in one performance of a play outside of class

**Required Texts:**

**Grades:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valdez Response</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play I: Individual</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play II: Collaborative</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Reflection</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1000</td>
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</table>

**Be Prepared for Class**

To prepare for each class, please do the following:
1. Wear comfortable clothing and be ready to participate in classroom activities
2. Bring all of your textbooks and a notebook with you to class
3. Read the assigned material **before** class
4. Respond via Desire2Learn to the assigned reading **before** class

**Reading Responses**

You’ll create responses to the reading for each class date, which may or may not be discussed during class (depends on time available). These responses are due on the day before class by 3pm on Desire2Learn. Each response should cover both numbered selections and is worth around 18
points. Your response should convey that 1) you read the assigned material, 2) you understand the material, and 3) you have made connections between the material and class and/or your writing process.

Some suggested formats for your response to the reading: 1) a List of Ten (for each numbered selection), which means ten of anything about the reading, such as words you needed to look up, items you found interesting or confusing, phrases you had questions about. ANYTHING GOES. Write page and paragraph numbers, 450–500 words per list, 2) a 5–7 minute video (for each numbered selection) in which you discuss the reading and your thoughts on it, or 3) good, old-fashioned notes (for each numbered selection) of 450–500 words (with page and paragraph numbers).

Attendance and Participation
I keep attendance. You may miss up to four classes. If you miss a fifth class, you will fail the course. Two late arrivals = one absence. Exceptions will be made only for documented emergencies and documented school activities. In order to receive credit for material due on a day you are absent, submit it the day before class via Desire2Learn by 3pm. I pay attention to participation—this is a collaborative class and requires active engagement during each class. If you are not fully participating in class, you will be asked to leave, which will result in an absence.

I Don’t Have to Show You No Stinking Badges by Luis Valdez at Doudna Fine Arts Center:
You must attend one performance of I Don’t Have to Show You No Stinking Badges by Luis Valdez at the Doudna Fine Arts Center Black Box and write a response of 1000–1500 words. Your response should 1) briefly describe the performance, and 2) comment on the play utilizing Egri’s ideas about writing plays and Boal’s concepts of Theatre of the Oppressed. The show runs Friday, September 20th – Sunday, September 22nd.

Plays
You’ll write one short play individually and another short play collaboratively for this class. The collaborative play will be performed with your co-writers on EIU campus. Individual short plays are due on Desire2Learn by 3pm on Monday, September 30th. Collaborative plays are due on Desire2Learn by 3pm on the class day before your play will be performed. Performances will take place during class time (if possible) at various locations around campus. More details to follow.

Final Reflection:
You’ll write a 7–10 page reflection on the course, the readings for class, the plays you wrote, and any other material relevant to your development as a playwright. Graduate Students: your reflection must be 12–14 pages long.

Extra Credit
If you attend any plays (other than Valdez’ or fellow students’ plays), or any prose or poetry readings outside of class, I’ll give you 10 points extra credit if you write a 500-word reflection/review. Please send via Desire2Learn within one week after attending.

Students with Documented Disabilities
If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodation, you must make arrangements through the Office of Disability Services; you should contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
Note for Graduate Students
In order to earn graduate credit for this course, you will be expected to take on a leadership role throughout the semester. This can occur in many ways, such as leading activities, prodding discussion, and organizing collaborative experiences. Please see me during the first two weeks of class to discuss your participation in the course.

Tentative Schedule

Week One
Tuesday, 8/20: Introduction and overview
Thursday, 8/22: Reading: 1) Egri Intro, Foreword, and Preface; 2) Games: Translator’s Introduction and Postscript

Week Two
Thursday, 8/29: Reading: 1) Egri, II. Character – The Bone Structure, Environment, The Dialectical Approach; 2) Games: Ch. 1 Theatre of the Oppressed in Europe

Week Three
Tuesday, 9/3: [No Class Meeting] Reading: Egri, II. Character – Character Growth, Strength of Will in a Character
Thursday, 9/5: Reading: 1) Egri, II. Character – Plot or Character-Which? Characters Plotting Their Own Play, Pivotal Character; 2) Games: Ch. 2 The Structure of the Actor’s Work

Week Four
Tuesday, 9/10: Reading: 1) Egri, II. Character – The Antagonist, Orchestration, Unity of Opposites; 2) Theatre of the Oppressed (TO): Foreword and Aristotle’s Coercive System of Tragedy, xviii–6

Week Five
Tuesday, 9/17: Reading: TO: Aristotle’s Coercive System of Tragedy, 7–24
Thursday, 9/19: Reading: TO: Aristotle’s Coercive System of Tragedy, 25–50
Friday, 9/20–Sunday 9/22: I Don’t Have to Show You No Stinking Badges by Luis Valdez at Doudna Fine Arts Center:

Week Six
Tuesday, 9/24: Reading: 1) Egri, III. Conflict – Foreshadowing Conflict, Point of Attack, Transition; 2) Egri, III. Conflict – Crisis, Climax, Resolution

Week Seven
Monday, 9/30: DUE: Play I
Tuesday, 10/1: DUE: Response to I Don’t Have to Show You No Stinking Badges by Luis Valdez at Doudna Fine Arts Center; Workshop
Thursday, 10/3: Workshop; Reading: TO: Ch. 2, Machiavelli and the Poetics of Virtù, 53–65

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Week Eight
Tuesday, 10/8: Workshop; Reading: TO: Ch. 2, Machiavelli and the Poetics of Virtù, 66–79
Thursday, 10/10: Workshop; Reading: TO: Ch. 3, Hegel and Brecht: The Character as Subject or the Character as Object?, 83–97

Week Nine
Tuesday, 10/15: Workshop; Reading: TO: Ch. 3, Hegel and Brecht: The Character as Subject or the Character as Object?, 98–115
Thursday, 10/17: Workshop; Reading: TO: Ch. 4, Poetics of the Oppressed, 119–30

Week Ten
Tuesday, 10/22: Reading: 1) TO: Ch. 4, Poetics of the Oppressed, 130–42; 2) TO: Ch. 4, Poetics of the Oppressed, 142–55
Thursday, 10/24: Reading: 1) Games: Ch. 4, The Early Forms of Forum Theatre; 2) Games: Ch. 5, Forum Theatre, Doubts and Certainties, 253–63

Week Eleven
Tuesday, 10/29: Reading: Games: Ch. 5, Forum Theatre, Doubts and Certainties, 263–8, 2) Games: Ch. 5, Forum Theatre, Doubts and Certainties, 268–76
Thursday, 10/31: Reading: Games: Ch. 6, First Experiences with Invisible Theatre

Week Twelve
Tuesday, 11/5: Performance Prep; Reading: TO, Ch. 5, Development of the Arena Theater of São Paolo, 159–72
Thursday, 11/7: Performance Prep; Reading: TO, Ch. 5, Development of the Arena Theater of São Paolo, 173–90

Week Thirteen
Tuesday, 11/12 & Thursday, 11/14: Performances

Week Fourteen
Tuesday, 11/19 & Thursday, 11/21: Performances

Week Fifteen
Tuesday, 11/26 & Thursday, 11/28: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Sixteen
Tuesday, 12/3: Reading: Games: Ch. 7, Artistic Creation and Divine Madness
Thursday, 12/5: Evaluations and Wrap-Up

Monday, 12/9: DUE by 3pm: Final Reflection