

**NC GLOBAL DISTINCTION**  
**Faculty Curriculum Development Grant**

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Globalizing DRA 300 and DRA 301 – Acting I and Acting II

**DRA 300: Course Description:**

ACTING I – This course provides an applied study of the actor's craft. Topics include role analysis, training the voice, and body concentration, discipline, and self-evaluation. Upon completion, students should be able to explore their creativity in an acting ensemble.

**DRA 301: Course Description:**

ACTING II – This course provides additional hands-on practice in the actor's craft. Emphasis is placed on further analysis, characterization, growth, and training for acting competence. Upon completion, students should be able to explore their creativity in an acting ensemble.

**Module title:**

Globalizing the Actor: Applying Latin American Theatre to Actor Training.

**Module Description**

This module will account for four weeks of the 16 week course.

The emphasis of the module is on the student-actor's study of works by contemporary playwrights living and writing in Latin America about global issues in Latin America; for example, the works of Brazilian playwright Nelson Rodrigues. Acting students will also engage with major works by contemporary Latino playwrights writing about the Latino experience in America, for example *Letters From Cuba* by María Irene Fornés. The module will utilize post-colonial, Latino theatrical texts to expose actors-in-training to global themes, characters and stories through the lens of contemporary Latin American playwrights. In this module the term, "Latin American," refers to the collective and individual cultures

of; Latino/as, Chicano/as, Cubans and Puerto Ricans, and the associated history and cultures of Mexico and Spain.

### **Global Learning Outcomes**

Throughout this module, students will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of global issues facing Latin America today, through the medium of Latino theatre;
2. Establish higher-level, global critical thinking skills and apply them to the actor's craft;
3. Contextualize the importance of understanding global cultures and peoples prior to performances of theatrical texts pertaining to those cultures and peoples;
4. Demonstrate engagement with post-colonial, non-American plays and playwrights through analytical reading, group discussion, and writing about Latin American theatre and multiculturalism.
5. Exhibit an understanding and application of acting concepts through rehearsed improvisation, monologue and ensemble performance by identifying, deconstructing and performing character analysis on specific plays by Latin America playwrights in preparation for performance of these plays.

### **Global Learning Activities**

#### **1. Character Study (written assignment)**

##### 1. Objective

A character study serves the actor's understanding of their character and the place the character holds within the story of the play. Each acting student will perform a written character study of a Latin American character.

## 2. Procedure

Students will deconstruct a Latin American play script paying particular attention to specific Latin American character indicated by the instructor. Students will perform deeper analyses into the relationships, traits, and objectives of that character and the function the character serves within the play, as well as the ways the character is represents the Latino experience.

## 3. Assessment and Follow-up Assignment

The character study will be graded using a rubric. The grade for this assignment will form part of the students' final grade for the course.

## 4. Resources

Play script source material, handouts and web resources on how to perform a character analysis.

## **2. Rehearsed Improvisation**

### 1. Objective

Rehearsed improvisations form the core learning methodology for Acting I and Acting II. Students are provided with source material and given time (10-15 minutes) to improvise and rehearse a short scene based on or inspired by the source material. The objective is to have acting students analyze issues within Latin America and humanize those issues by portraying the emotions, relationships and stories of the individuals dealing with these issues.

### 2. Procedure

Using appropriate source material students will create short scenes highlighting contemporary issues in Latin America; for example, students might create and rehearse scenes exploring subjects as diverse as; "stereotypes and the inequality of female ethnic minorities in public political office in Bogota, Columbia," (Bustos, 2071) and "human relationships and 'the effect of climate change on local farming communities in Argentina's Córdoba province'" (Gilbert, 2017).

### 3. Assessment and Follow-up Assignment

Students will be assessed on their approach to creating characters and stories based on the source material as it pertains to the real-life experience of individuals dealing with global issues in Latin America. Student actors will also be assessed on their application of acting techniques taught during the rest of the course. Feedback will be given by the instructor in dialogue with the rest of the class after each rehearsed improvisation performance.

### 4. Resources

Magazine and newspaper articles. Character studies created in Global Learning Activity 1 (above).

### **3. Two person scenes / duologues**

#### 1. Objective

Scenes between two characters allow acting students to focus on their character's emotions in relationship to another character's emotions. Duologues provide a lens through which actors can contextualize their character's thoughts, feeling, desires and objectives with those of others. This process guides student-actors towards an empathy for the real-life individuals living the experiences of the character. These exercises highlight the importance of understanding global cultures and peoples prior to performances of theatrical texts pertaining to those cultures and peoples;

#### 2. Procedure

In pairs students rehearse short scenes from published plays by contemporary Latin American playwrights, especially scenes which portray alternate sides of global issues in Latin America.

#### 3. Assessment and Follow-up Assignment

Students are assessed on the authenticity of their characterization and their ability to draw inferences from the source materials as well as their application of acting techniques taught in the class.

#### 4. Resources

Handouts of two person scenes from published plays by contemporary Latin American playwrights

### **4. Monologues / soliloquies.**

#### 1. Objective

Monologues serve the same pedagogical function as two person scene studies, but allow the student to focus on the performance of their character and delve considerably deeper into the character's personality and psychological state.

#### 2. Procedure

With guidance from the instructor, each student will rehearse a monologue or soliloquy from a published play by a contemporary Latin American playwrights, especially a speech which portrays a character's deep psychological interaction with a global issue concerning contemporary Latin America.

#### 3. Assessment and Follow-up Assignment

Students are assessed on the authenticity of their characterization and their ability to draw inferences from the source materials as well as their application of acting techniques taught in the class.

#### 4. Resources

Handouts of monologues or soliloquies from published plays by contemporary Latin American playwrights.

### **5. Blackboard discussion boards**

#### 1. Objective

Demonstrate the students' knowledge, understanding and personal opinions on global themes and topics raised in published plays by contemporary Latin American playwrights.

#### 1. Procedure

Students will respond to one Blackboard Discussion Board prompt each week. To complete the assignment, each student will provide their own response to the prompt first, then comment on two of their peers' responses.

#### 2. Assessment and Follow-up Assignments

Each Discussion Board answer grade is worth 5% of each student's final grade for the class.

#### 3. Resources

Blackboard.

## **Resources**

### **Selected readings from theatrical texts:**

Plays by Latin American playwrights.

*The Oxcart* A play by René Marqués

*The Capeman.* A musical play written by Paul Simon and Derek Walcott based on the life of convicted Puerto Rican murderer Salvador Agrón.

*Marisol* A play in two acts written by the Puerto Rican playwright José Rivera. The work earned Rivera a 1993 Obie Award for playwriting.

*In the Heights* A musical with music and lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda and a book by Quiara Alegria Hudes. The story involves characters in the largely Hispanic-American neighborhood of Washington Heights in New York City.

*Hamilton* Writer/director/actor Lin-Manuel Miranda. Of mostly Puerto Rican descent Miranda grew up in a Latino neighborhood and spent a month every year in his grandparents' home town, Vega Alta, in Puerto Rico.

*Letters From Cuba* By María Irene Fornés, a Cuban-American avant-garde playwright and director. Based on three decades of letters Maria Irene Fornes received from her brother in Havana, "Letters from Cuba" moves back and forth in time and place and spirit, linking a young dancer and her relatives in Cuba

*Anna in the Tropics* By Cuban-American playwright Nilo Cruz. This play won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Cruz is the first Latino so honored

### Other Latin American theatre influences

- The Latino Theatre Company (LTC), Los Angeles, CA. and their productions on *Premeditation*, *Solitude*, *la Victima*, *la Virgen de Guadalupe*, and *Dios Inantzin*.
- The works of Theater and film director Jose Luis Valenzuela.
- The Hispanic Organization of Latin Actors (HOLA), an active arts service and advocacy organization. HOLA's Directory of Talent was created in 1981 and was the first directory to feature solely Latino talent. Currently, the online HOLA Talent Directory is the internet's only concentrated pool of Latino acting talent.
- *West Side Story*. Book by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein,

### Academic readings for this Global Module.

Bustos, Camila. "We cannot progress when women's voices remain at the margins." Quoted in Larsson, Naomi. "What is at stake for Latin America in 2017?" *The Guardian online*. 7 Feb 2017. Web. 1 Oct 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/feb/07/what-is-at-stake-for-latin-america-in-2017>

Gilbert, Jonathan. "Climate Change Could Dampen Argentina's Recovery." *Bloomberg Businessweek*. 19 Sept 2017. Web. 1 Oct 2017.

Godinez, Henry. "So Many Stories To Tell." *American Theatre* 20.10 (2003): 48-52. International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text. Web. 30 Sept 2017.  
<http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/11567427/so-many-stories-tell>

Considers the opinion of several artists on the commonality and diversity of Latino theater in the U.S. Eddie Torres, artistic director of Teatro Vista; Abel LÃ³pez, associate producing director of GALA Hispanic Theatre; Playwrights Luis Alfaro and Nilo Cruz.

Graham-Jones, Jean. "Comment: On Attributions, Appropriations, Misinterpretations, And Latin American Theatre Studies." *Theatre Journal* 56.3 (2004): 347-351. Academic Search Premier. Web. 30 Sept 2017. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/173565/summary>

Horwitz, Simi. "Latino Theatre Artists: Opportunity And Challenge." *Back Stage* 42.31 (2001): 20. International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text. Web.

Horwitz, Simi. "New Perspectives." *Back Stage* 44.12 (2003): 24. International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text. Web.

Huerta, Jorge. "From the margins to the mainstream: Latino/a theater in the U.S." *Studies in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Literature* 32.2 (2008): 463+. Literature Resource Center. Web. 30 Sept 2017. <http://newprairiepress.org/sttcl/vol32/iss2/13/>

The author discusses Latina/o theatre as it evolved from social protest theatre of the 1960s to professional theatre companies and theatre artists working throughout the country.

- Huerta, Jorge A. "Latino Theater Alliance/L.A. Encuentro 2013: We've Come A Long Way, Baby!." *Gestos: Revista De Teoría Y Práctica Del Teatro Hispánico* 28.56 (2013): 169-170. International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text. Web.
- Nestor, Frank. "Colorblindness And Controversy." *Back Stage* (19305966) 53.3 (2012): 2-3. International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text. Web.
- Svich, Caridad. "US Polyglot Latino Theatre And Its Link To The Americas 1." *Contemporary Theatre Review* 16.2 (2006): 189-197. Academic Search Premier. Web.
- Tolkoff, Esther. "Not A Subculture: NYC's Thriving Latino Theatre." *Back Stage* 41.10 (2000): 5. International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text. Web.
- Valdez, Luis. "Chapter 77: Notes On Chicano Theater (1972)." *Twentieth Century Theatre: A Sourcebook*. 315-319. n.p.: Taylor & Francis Ltd / Books, 1995. International Bibliography of Theatre & Dance with Full Text. Web.