

**Carleton University
Fall 2019
Department of English**

ENGL 3915 A: *Writing for the Theatre*

Prerequisites: third-year Honours standing, a 2000-level creative writing workshop, or permission of the instructor

Wednesdays, 6:08-8:55 PM

Location: Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Waisvisz

Email: sarah.waisvisz@carleton.ca

Office: Dunton Tower 1914

Office Hours: Wednesday afternoon, by appointment

Course Description:

ENGL 3915 is ideal for students in the Creative Writing and Drama concentrations; please consult the Department if you want to have the course recognized as a partial fulfillment of Requirement #9.

What is the difference between prose and dramatic writing, and what makes it *playable*? How do you fuse poetry with dance? What is immersive performance? What makes a spoken-word piece theatrical? What if we want to *keep* the Fourth Wall? Join professional theatre maker Sarah Waisvisz in a hands-on, experiential writing workshop where we will learn about contemporary genres of performance and the texts that propel them. If you want to hone your writing voice and explore the intersection between different artistic disciplines, then this workshop is for you. This course will involve

- designated in-class writing time with the aim of honing our writing voice and experimenting with different techniques
- opportunities to share, workshop, and respectfully critique each other's writing
- mandatory "field trips" to experience local professional performances together

Learning outcomes:

1. Students will emerge from this course with a portfolio of creative work for the stage.
2. Students will also gain a critical understanding of how the playwriting and theatre industry functions in Canada within an increasingly interdisciplinary artistic ecology.

3. Students will learn to read and experience artistic work as writers and theatre creators.
4. Students will learn how to critique/discuss a piece of dramatic writing, employing key terms such as “plot,” “voice,” and “style” as well as vocabulary related to dance, music, circus, and performance art.
5. Students will learn how to be “dramaturges” and edit their own work and that of others.
6. Students will have the opportunity to practice reading their own creative work in front of others.
7. Students will learn from professional artists working in the field of theatre.

Required texts:

Required reading material will be available on ARES (a digital repository of class readings made available through MacOdrum library), on Reserve at the Library, or on CULearn, depending.

Students are expected to attend the following two shows at the National Arts Centre; LiveRush Tickets cost \$15; please contact me if this cost is a barrier and I will help you attend.

- *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (Sept. 11-21)
- *Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story* (Oct. 16-27)

We will spend time in class discussing these works, as well as others, and we will work on writing exercises related to these works— which in turn will inform your Final Project.

Please note that we will do some writing every day and every day someone will share some work out loud. This class is highly participatory.

Evaluation:

NB: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

- 1. Attendance & Participation** in class and to all field trips and special activities: 10%
- 2. Research presentation** about an interdisciplinary Canadian artist or project: 10%
- 3. Artist Notebook** (in class writing exercises, texts, drafts that support your project): 30%
- 4. Editorial feedback** regular, respectful editorial contributions to your peers : 15%
- 5. Final Project:** 35%

Please note:

- **Attendance** will be taken at the beginning of each class. A student who misses more than four classes without a medical note or note of accommodation will automatically lose 10% of their final grade. Please write to me in advance of a known, legitimate, impending absence; your presence and active participation during workshop directly affects your improvement as a writer as well as your classmates' experiences, which is why I insist on regular attendance.
- **Final Project:** Our opportunities for regular writing and editing during each class will give you fodder and material for your final project, due the last day of class. The final project will consist of a text meant for the stage, and an accompanying "Vision Statement" to explain how the text functions within a larger theatrical whole. Before turning in your final project, you **MUST** have 2 consultation sessions with me about your project. The consultation sessions together count for 5% but if we do not meet and I do not give my OK I cannot accept the completion of your assignment. These consultations will ensure you are on the right track and will also be the occasion to discuss your writing process, as well as any struggles and successes you may be facing. These consultations can be short discussions.

Please note: Because I am a Sessional Instructor, I do not work out of campus. Consequently, I am available by email for consultation, in addition to after class is adjourned. Please email me in advance to schedule time for a conversation or appointment.

Draft Calendar

DATE	TOPIC / ASSIGNMENT
Wed. Sept. 4	First Class of term: Introduction
Mon. Sept. 9	VOICE and MOVEMENT workshop
Wed. Sept. 11	considering actors, physicality, voice, design, sound, audience, setting, etc.
Mon. Sept. 16	Different registers of storytelling, different types of plays and non-play theatrical works
Wed. Sept. 18	What is plot and how do we write it? What did Aristotle suggest?
Mon. Sept. 23	<i>The Unnatural and Accidental Women</i> by Marie Clements: theme, characters, plot
Wed. Sept. 25	<i>The Unnatural and Accidental Women</i> by Marie Clements : structure and style
Mon. Sept. 30	Rosh Hashanah: no class
Wed. Oct. 2	<i>Monstrous</i> by Sarah Waisvisz: theme, characters, plot
Mon. Oct. 7	<i>Monstrous</i> continued: structure and style
Wed. Oct. 9	Yom Kippur: no class
Mon. Oct. 14	Thanksgiving: no class
Wed. Oct. 16	Brainstorming our Final Projects and Declaring our Plans for our Writing
Mon. Oct. 21	Fall Break: no class
Wed. Oct. 23	Fall Break: no class
Mon. Oct. 28	<i>Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story</i> by Hannah Moscovitch: theme, characters, plot
Wed. Oct. 30	<i>Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story</i> by Hannah Moscovitch; structure and style
Mon. Nov. 4	1 st scene of Final Project due—to be dramaturged in class by a partner
Wed. Nov. 6	Edited 1 st scene due
Mon. Nov. 11	2 nd scene of Final Project due – to be dramaturged in class by a partner

Wed. Nov. 13	Edited 2 nd scene due
Mon. Nov. 18	Climax scene due
Wed. Nov. 20	Edited Climax scene due
Mon. Nov. 25	Denouement scene due
Wed. Nov. 27	Edited Denouement scene due
Mon. Dec. 2	Showcase #1
Wed. Dec. 4	Last Class: Showcase #2 ; students hand in Final Project and Artist Notebook

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline