

EXAMPLE SYLLABUS

English 319: Theater and Social Change

This course teaches students how to use their creative skills and social commitments to facilitate the powerful expressiveness of high school youth and of incarcerated youth and adults. In-class exercises, improvisations, and discussion of theater and pedagogical texts prepare us to assist workshop participants in imagining and shaping their own plays. Students will work an average of two to three hours a week in one of a number of state correctional facilities located in Adrian, Chelsea, Detroit, Jackson, Ypsilanti, Lapeer and elsewhere, at Central, Cody, Crockett Technical, and Southeastern High Schools in Detroit, or at one of five juvenile facilities. An additional two hours is spent in class meetings, and a further hour is devoted to meetings between each site team and the instructor. No exams.

Admission to the class is by interview and permission of instructor only.

<p>Winter Term 2012 Buzz Alexander Office Hours: Thurs. 11:30-1 3275 Angell</p>	<p>Meeting times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuesday 1-3, 1624 Chemistry• Thursday 1-30, 1624 Chemistry. January 5, 12 and 19.• Every other Wednesday, Social Hall, Methodist Church on State Street, across from North Quad or in 3222 Angell. For the church, go to back of the church and, once entered, straight ahead. 6:30-9 pm.• PCAP training meeting, Saturday, January 7, 11-1, Ginsberg Center (Corner of East University and Hill), lunch at 1.• Specific portfolio training will be in class January 10.• Class retreat. We will brainstorm an evening, with food, early in the term (I may have emailed you all about meeting the first Sunday of term for this retreat).• As soon as we are ready, we will meet in small groups (depending on site, for an hour each week). This will fit our schedules.• After January 19, we will no longer meet on Thursday.
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Books

At Michigan Book & Supply:

- Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow.
 - Augusto Boal, Games for Actors and Non-Actors.
 - Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed.
 - Myles Horton, The Long Haul.
 - Judith Tannenbaum, Disguised as a Poem.
 - Jonathan Kozol, The Shame of the Nation (if you are working at a high school).*
 - Edward Humes, No Matter How Loud I Shout (if you are working at a juvenile facility).*
 - Nell Bernstein: All Alone in the World (if you are working in a prison)*
- * Only one of these is required: they are all strongly recommended.

Course Pack

At Dollar Bill's, Church Street:

- Prison Creative Arts Project Mission Statement
- Selection from Prison Creative Arts Project Handbook.
- Jonathan Kozol, The Night is Dark and I am Far from Home.
- Lizzy Baskerville essay and poem.
- Ross Kidd, "Popular Theatre and Popular Struggle in Kenya: The Story of the Kamariithu Community Cultural Centre," Theaterwork Magazine, September/October, 1982, 47-59.

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Films

- “El Teatro Campesino.”
- “The AIDS Show.”
- “Junkie.”
- “Inside Out.”

Schedule:

January 5	Introductory meeting. Exercise
January 10	Kozol, The Night is Dark and I am Far from Home.
January 12	Kozol, Lizzy Baskerville reading.
January 12	7:00-10:30pm Evening of theater work. Bring blindfold. G127 Angell.
January 14	Retreat. 9-5:30. Selection of teams. In the Social Hall, Methodist Church, State Street across from North Quad. Go the entrance at the rear of the church, then straight ahead for the Social Hall. Bring food to share for lunch. Please arrive on time
January 17	Open session. Note: This week begin the one hour team meetings at a time convenient to you. You also will have site orientations this week or the next. Read Selection from Prison Creative Arts Project Handbook.
January 19	“El Teatro Campesino” (in class), Kidd essay.
January 19	7:00-10:30pm Evening of theater work. G127 Angell
January 24	Open session. Boal, Games for Actors and Non-Actors, pp. 48-91 (the Boal will give you additional exercises and ideas for your sites). Not required but highly recommended, pp. xxii-47. Note: No Thursday classes from this point on. Notes: Some of you may be starting at your sites this week. Definitely the next week at the latest. Journals come in for the first time this week.
January 29 (Sunday)	7:30pm “The AIDS Show.” Meet at 3275 Angell at 7:25pm
January 31	Horton, The Long Haul.
February 5	7:30pm “Junkie.” Meet at 3275 Angell at 7:25pm.
February 7	The bone game. Boal, pp.92-171
February 12 (Sunday)	7:30pm “Inside Out.” Meet at 3275 Angell at 7:25pm.
February 14	Open session. Boal, pp. 161-240 (final sections, on forum theater, on invisible theater, on artistic creation and divine madness, and the postscript on “the pedagogy of fear - theatre and the twin towers” are highly recommended: pp. 241-301).
February 21	Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Quiz on the reading.
Spring Break	Tannenbaum, <u>Disguised as a Poem.</u>
March 6	Open session
March 13	Humes, No Matter How Loud I Shout (juvenile facilities), or Kozol, The Shame of the Nation (high schools), or Bernstein, All Alone in the World (prisons).
March 20	Open session or guest from Seventeenth Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners. We will leave class early to go to the opening. Note: March 20 – April 4: Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners, Duderstadt Gallery, Media Union, North Campus, T-S 10-7, Sun-Mon 12-6, closed Monday.
March 27	Alexander, <u>The New Jim Crow</u>
April 3, 10, 17	Open sessions

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A Note on Class Time

For the entire term we will be meeting Tuesdays 3:00-5:00 (and the first three Thursdays) and using that period principally for discussion of readings, films, and everything else on our minds, sometimes for theater games, exercises, and improvisations. The two January Thursday evenings will be devoted entirely to theater work, giving you some initial tools and ideas for your work at the site. After our Thursday class January 19, we will have no more Thursday classes. During the weeks of January 16 and 23 you will be meeting with me in your teams and will be traveling to your site for an orientation. You will also have weekly one-hour team meetings with me the rest of the term. You might begin at your site the week of January 23, definitely the week of January 30.

Performances

Each team will work out performance dates with the prisoners, incarcerated youth, or students in their workshop and with the institution where they are working. Typically these performances take place in our last week of classes (the week of April 18) or the following week. **It will be important to schedule these performances well ahead of time.**

Assignments

- The main assignment, of course, is your group project. Each of you will be in a team with one (most likely) or two others. You will co-facilitate a prison, juvenile site, or high school theater workshop. Out of this team project will come from each of you **a ten to fifteen page analysis** of the term's work, written from the angle that is most challenging and useful to you. It is due by two days after your performance.
- In addition you will write **a weekly journal** (journals **begin the week of January 23**: they may be turned in in class, in team meeting, or under the door of 3275 Angell). Journals that come in after 5pm on Friday will be considered late and receive minimal or no response. You may take two weeks off from journal writing, but never take off two weeks in a row. You will write a total of nine journal entries. No entry is assigned the week of April 16.
- You are also required to **attend at least one performance** at a site other than your own.
- **A highly recommended** experience. Invite your liaison (and others from the facility) to dinner. S/he has been working at the site for a significant amount of time, has made commitments, has a range of experiences (good and bad), ideas, and aspirations, and had done significant thinking about what it means to work there and about the social context in which s/he is working. And you'll have a lot of questions. You'll learn a lot.
- Grading: I will discuss grading during the first session.