**University of Potsdam**

**Transnational Theatre Writings**

**MA seminar course**

**Summer 2020**

**Tutor: Dr Mojisola Adebayo**

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Image by Mohammad Saba’aneh available at <https://ladakhexpress.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/6a014e5f5d3c7c970c017ee8a051f8970d-750wi.jpg>

**COURSE OUTLINE**

This 12 week online seminar series will provide an introduction to creative writing for the stage. You will be provided with creative writing exercises that enable you to write new short dramatic texts for performance (scenes, stories, plays, performance poems and so on) that raise socio-political questions that are pertinent to the your lives and transnational experiences. We will simultaneously examine pre-existing Anglophone play texts from the African continent and the African Diaspora that are considered ‘modern classics’ and ask why and how these plays in particular, have contributed to ideas of a modern British and American theatre. We will investigate the political role of post-colonial theatre in building the independent nation state as well as the state of the individual, in healing from national and personal trauma, in raising debate around social issues in communities such as gender, race and economic in/equality and in developing cultural city spaces. We will consider theatre as a means of transnational cultural transfer. There will be space to write, read plays, reflect, debate and receive feedback from peers and the seminar tutor.

**NB:** the course has been adapted for online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. We will use virtual learning platforms: Moodle, Zoom and email communication. As this is the first time the seminar is being taught online and as theatre is a practice that requires us to be present in spaces together, the overall plan is flexible and will be subject to change and adaptation, according to our learning and teaching needs.

**AIMS**

* To introduce students to the collaborative nature of theatre-making.
* To encourage students to connect their creative writing to socio-political questions.
* To assist students in the development of dramaturgical tools necessary to undertake their own critically-informed playwriting.
* To encourage students to reflect critically on the relationship between texts and their interpretation in performance and production.
* To learn about playwriting, post-colonialism, modernity and transnational cultural transfer, through Anglophone modern classic play texts from the African continent and the Diaspora.

Students who have completed this course should have acquired the skills to:

* Work collaboratively and independently.
* Develop shorter and longer pieces of performance writing.
* Analyse and critique play texts.
* Explore different approaches to writing for performance.
* Respond to dramaturgical feedback.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this module students should have:

* Increased knowledge of selected plays from African continent and Diaspora, their socio-political contexts, transnational performances and significance.
* Increased knowledge of theories and practices of writing for theatre.
* Understanding of the collaborative nature of theatre making.
* Critically analysed play texts.
* Participated in discussions about their own and others' work.
* Compiled a portfolio of developmental writing.
* Developed active theatre viewing (where possible online).
* Researched and written a 15-20 minute play text that addresses a socio-political question.
* Independently researched the ways in which the knowledge acquired on the course can be applied to educational contexts (teacher training students).

**KEY SKILLS OUTCOMES**

* Communication skills.
* Collegiality.
* Identifying and solving problems.
* Learning how to learn.
* Personal and professional development.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The first half of the course will focus on learning about playwriting through selected plays: *Ubu and the Truth Commission* by Jane Taylor, William Kentridge and the Handspring Puppet Company (1997), *Ruined* (2010) by Lynn Nottage, *Death and the King’s Horseman* (1975) by Wole Soyinka, *Master Harold… and the ‘boys’* (1982) by Athol Fugard*, A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) by Lorraine Hansberry and *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange (1974). The plays have been selected because they are critically acclaimed, award winning ‘modern classics’ of Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Anglophone literature, from Africa and the African Diaspora, that have informed the canon of drama in the English language.

Our main purpose on this course is to study the plays in order to improve and develop our own playwriting and understanding of making theatre for transnational audiences. In addition, we will broaden our knowledge of post-colonial literatures and performance modes and extend our understanding of the concept of modernity, through studying the play texts. Teacher training students will also start to think about the ways in which the knowledge, skills and insights gained on the course can be applied to educational contexts, through tutorials and independent research.

The play texts will be uploaded online and or emailed to you directly. The tutor will also provide short excerpts of other relevant play texts from around the world and knowledge of plays and performances from our own cultural traditions will be shared amongst all of us. In addition to the play texts, we will carry out weekly readings (one or two specified chapters each week) from our key theoretical texts: *The Secret Life of Plays* by Steve Waters and *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* by Stephen Jeffreys (both available as ebooks through the Potsdam University online library catalogue). These are two of the most accessible and useful text-books on playwriting, written in English, in recent years.

The first half of the course will also involve short and playful creative writing exercises, games and tasks, both online collectively and on your own, in order to build up your artistic confidence and writing skills. You will also be expected to write independently. Some of this writing will be shared with the tutor and with each other, for feedback. By the end of the first half of the course, you should have built up a small portfolio of creative writing, primarily for the stage. The second half of the course will focus much more on you and your writing and less on reading the plays or theories of other writers. There will be opportunities to have feedback from the tutor, as you work towards developing a 15-20 minute play text for assessment. Teacher training students will have additional support in thinking about applying their knowledge to educational contexts, through 1-2-1 tutorials and independent research.

For more information on your tutor as playwright and theatre for social change artist, s**ee** [www.mojisolaadebayo.com](http://www.mojisolaadebayo.com)

**Scroll down the blog for ‘new links to past shows’ to see productions. To read your tutors work see:** Adebayo, *Mojisola Adebayo: Plays One* (London: Oberon Books, 2011) and *Mojisola Adebayo: Plays Two* (London: Oberon Books, 2019).

**ASSESSMENT**

**ALL ANGLOPHONE MODERNITIES AND TEACHER TRAINING STUDENTS SUBMIT:**

**Assignment 1 - Play / Performance Text**

During the course of the semester you will develop a **15-20 minute play / performance text** (7-10 pages, 11 point font, 1.5 line spacing). The piece can be a work in and of itself or it can be an excerpt from a longer play. However, if you choose to take the second route, please include a short synopsis of the whole and indicate where the excerpt comes in.

**Your play / performance text should demonstrate your ability to write:**

* fully fleshed-out, developed characters with distinct voices (this is not to say they need to be realistic, but they should be well considered and consistent with the style of the text).
* a carefully considered dramatic arc, a text that demonstrates a change and/or development of some kind with regards to your chosen socio-political question.
* a well-structured plot.
* a coherent and consistent style.
* an entire world with established rules, norms, conventions and logic.
* stage directions that contribute to the development of the plot and dramatic arc without overly dictating the nature of the production (or if you prefer not to have any stage directions, make sure this decision is justified).
* a text that has developed over the course of several weeks and responds to the dramaturgical feedback received by your peers and by your tutor.
* work that demonstrates a willingness to take risks and experiment.

**Assignment 1** will be marked on a **pass / fail** basis.

**Please note:** MA Anglophone Modernities students must also write a long research paper of 7000 words linked to ONE of the three seminars associated with the module (but not necessarily linked to this seminar).

**TEACHER TRAINING STUDENTS ONLY:**

If you are taking Transnational Theatre Writings as ‘seminar 2’, you will need to submit further work:

**Assignment 2.a Short Research Essay**

1. **Students enrolled in the 6-credit option** must also submit a **short** **research** **essay** (1500-2000 words) in response to the following question: ‘Choose one of the plays we studied on the course. Discuss the ways in which this play reflects and or resists the theories of playwriting proposed by Steve Waters and or Stephen Jeffreys. Make sure you include at least three references to the key texts by Waters and or Jeffreys.’

**Assignment 2.b Long Research Paper**

1. **Students enrolled in the** **9-credit option with Portfolioprüfung** (portfolio assessment) will submit the **short research paper** (see assignment 2.a above) AND write a **long research paper** of approximately 6000 words. This long research paper will be a proposal for how you could take one or more of the plays, playwriting techniques and theories studied on the course and apply them in an educational context. Your research paper must make reference to pre-existing examples of theatre-in-education theories, histories and practices. A focussed question will be developed in discussion with your tutor and you will be provided with guidance in the field of theatre-in-education.

**Assignments 2.a and 2.b should demonstrate**

* Knowledge of at least one play from African continent and Diaspora, their postcolonial and or Diasporic contexts and transnational performance(s).
* Knowledge of theories and practices of writing for theatre.
* Understanding of the collaborative nature of theatre making.
* Ability to critically analyse play texts.
* Independent research into theatre-in-education histories, theories and practices (assignment 2.b only).

**Assignments 2.a and 2.b will be graded.**

**OUTLINE SCHEDULE**

An outline schedule is provided below. The first six weeks are designed to give you time to study playwriting, plays and theories of writing for the theatre, through the lens of selected playwrights / theatre makers and theorists and to address questions of transnational and postcolonial writing. During this time you will develop a portfolio of your own creative writing and start to develop ideas towards your play. Weeks 7-12 are much more focussed on your writing your 15-20 minute play, which will be your main assignment for assessment.

Due to the online and creative nature, the schedule will be flexible according to our creative learning needs, desires and interests. Readings, viewings and tasks will be uploaded onto Moodle each week. We will also have tutorials each week via Zoom, to discuss readings and our creative writing. These tutorials will be scheduled according to student / tutor availability. Please set aside a minimum of five hours per week, to enable you to complete readings, to attend tutorials and to give you time to write.

**SCHEDULE – PART ONE**

**Week 1**

**INTRODUCTIONS - Introducing you, your needs, requests, desires and expectations, introducing the course, aims, content, form and assessment, introducing the tutor as a theatre artist and playwright and exploring the 'play' in playwriting and writing for performance.**

**Tip of the week: Surprise is the birthplace of creativity. Let go and stay open. There is a ‘play’ in playwriting for a reason!**

**In preparation for our first online Zoom tutorial this week (date and time to be arranged) and to start your work on the course, please carry out the following tasks:**

* **Reply to the questions Mojisola will send you individually on email. Thank you.**
* **Read Helen Gilbert’s General Introduction to *Postcolonial Plays: An Anthology* (pages 1-7) and the Introduction to and play script of** *Ubu and the Truth Commission* by Jane Taylor, William Kentridge and the Handspring Puppet Company (pages 25-47). *Postcolonial Plays: An Anthology* is available as an **ebook through the library**.
* **Watch** *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (Johannesburg, 1997) by Jane Taylor, William Kentridge and the Handspring Puppet Company online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lVgT_x53z14>
* **Take notes** on the performance and **ask yourself**:
* **Why** was this play written? What is it asking you to question?
* **What** is the story? What happens? What is the premise of the play? Which theatrical devices does the play use? What is the relationship between the play script and the live performance? What does this teach you?
* **Who** are the characters and how are they conveyed? What do the characters want? What conflict is arises?
* **Where and when** is the play set and how does the setting inform the action?
* **How** is the play structured? How and which languages used to communicate the story?

The questions above are all questions that you will be asking yourself as you write your own play this Semester. Indeed, the why, what, who, where, when and how of playwriting will guide each of our weeks of creative learning together.

Furthermore, ask yourself:

* Why do you think *Ubu and the Truth Commission* had such transnational success and is considered a ‘modern classic’? Why do you think the central character / protagonist, ‘Ubu’, inspired by *Ubu Roi* (*King Ubu*) by Alfred Jarry (Paris, 1896) who was in turn inspired by the protagonist of William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (London, 1606), has been able to traverse cultures, nations and historical eras?
* **How does the play *Ubu and the Truth Commission* function for a nation healing from apartheid violence and colonial trauma?**
* **Participate in the online tutorial** (where possible)and be prepared to **share and discuss** your reflections.
* You will be set **creative writing task** to explore for next week.

**Please note:** Of course, theatre is an art form that requires us to be physically present in the same space together, so watching a play being performed, online, is never the ‘real thing’. However, *Ubu and the Truth Commission* has been selected for you to watch in Week 1 because the quality of the recording is relatively good, the play is highly theatrical, the text is considered a ‘modern classic’ in world, African and postcolonial drama; it is an example of transnational cultural transfer as the theatre production had great critical acclaim in both South Africa and Britain (1997). The play is inspired by *Ubu Roi* by Alfred Jarry (Paris, 1896) who was in turn inspired by the protagonist of William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (London, 1606). The central character and story has therefore had transnational potency and in our tutorial, we will consider why we think this is. We will use our learning to inform our own playwriting.

**Week 2**

**THE WHY - Why write? Why be a writer? Why do you need to write what you are going to write, and no other? How does asking 'why' with regard to socio-political questions inform your writing? Why is what you want to write important right now? Why does the audience need to be there? Why do we, the audience, care?... Think of your own ‘why’ questions…**

**Tips of the week:**

* **Why is the most primal and fundamental question of all human beings. Theatre is the art of human beings asking and thinking about a question that begins, *why…?* Why leads to all other questions, what if, what, where, when, how?... All of these questions are important, but why is the most fundamental.**
* **Never forget why the audience needs to be there. Without the audience there is no theatre. Why should I care? This is the question the audience brings to your play.**

**Topics of the week: We will explore questions of representation, power, privilege, premise and purpose in relation to your creative writing and by reflecting on *Ruined*.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

**NB: Always read the play texts aloud. Plays are written to be heard and seen.**

* **Read *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage (including the Introduction. Text to be provided via Moodle / email). *Ruined* deals (sensitively) with a topic some may find distressing. Email Mojisola on** [adebayo@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:adebayo@uni-potsdam.de) **for an alternative play text if preferred.**
* **Watch this short interview with Nottage to gain an insight into why Nottage wrote the play:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmWlrTOLUi8>
* **Write notes reflecting on why Lynn Nottage researched and wrote *Ruined* and add your answers to the online Moodle ‘pad. Ask -**
* **Why did Nottage write this play? What is the ‘why’ Nottage is asking in this play? Why did the audience need to be there? Why was this play so successful and important? What ethical questions does the play raise?**
* **Read and think about ‘Chapter Nine: A Taxonomy of Playwrights’ from our key text *The Secret Life of Plays* by Steve Waters, before the tutorial next week. If you were to place yourself in one of Waters’ types of playwrights, which might you be and why? Why do you want to write? What are the ‘whys’ you want to ask? We will discuss the Chapter in relation to questions of ‘the why’, above.**
* **Write creatively in response to the task suggested to you in the tutorial / online last week and in the words of African liberationist and leader of the Black Consciousness movement, Steve Biko, write what you like! Write every day. Keep a notebook and pen by your bed. Find spaces to write. Write with a pen and paper or pencil, write by speaking into a recording device, write with your body, write by drawing, write by typing, write by singing, write through rap, write in dialogue, write by moving – life is writing - just write!**

**Week 3**

**THE WHAT - What do you want to say? What is your question? What is the premise – the ‘what if? What do the characters want? What happens? What happens next?! What wants are in conflict? What are the power relations at play? What is the story? What shape does the story take? What is the structure? What are the actions? What are the stakes? What does not happen? What do the characters say / not say? What are the staging and symbols saying? What is the / are the central image(s)? Think of your own questions of what…**

**Tips of the week:**

'SOMETHING is about SOMETHING who wants SOMETHING but SOMETHING' - Roy Williams. It is your job to fill in the somethings!

‘Theatre is two human beings, a passion and a platform’ (Lope de Vega), or drama is two human beings (or less or more) engaged in the passionate conflict of desire in a space in which we watch. Let the character’s wants drive the action forward!

There is no drama without a struggle for power.

Theatre is the art of what happens. The most important word in theatre is: now.

**Topics of the week: We will explore desire, passion, urgency, necessity, plot, action, drive, movement, staging, symbols, change, dynamic and dramatic narrative in relation to your creative writing and by reflecting on your reading of *Death and the King’s Horseman*. Be prepared to share your creative writing and reflections.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

* **Read *Death and the King’s Horseman* by Wole Soyinka (text to be provided online) in relation to questions of ‘the what’, above. Reading Soyinka, like reading Shakespeare, can be difficult, the writing is deeply poetic and elaborate and steeped in the culture in which it is written. Your tutor will give you some background information on Yoruba culture to support your reading. Try to visualise what you read (the clip below will help you). Take your time in reading, read aloud, let the play wash over you, it is fine if you do not understand everything all at once.**
* **Write notes as you read and ask yourself:**
* **What happens? What does *not* happen? What is delayed from happening? What drives the action? Notice the clarity of the characters wants. Notice how the play is driven by passionate urgent wants, being in conflict. Notice how high the stakes are. Notice the power relations in the play. What would you say is the premise of the play, the ‘what if’? What is the story – in a sentence? What shape does it take, can you draw it? What theatrical devices are used, can you list them? What are the staging and symbols saying? What is the central image of the play? What might be the function of this play in post-colonial nation building?**
* **Write your responses on the Moodle pad and join in the discussion with others.**
* **Watch this clip of the Royal National Theatre’s 2009 production of Death and the King’s Horseman:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXgYPOL0gbY>
* **Read and reflect on ‘Chapter Seven: Dynamic Symbols: The Art of Suggestion’ from our key text *The Secret Life of Plays* by Steve Waters.**
* **If you have time, also read The Introduction and Chapter on Structure in Stephen Jeffrey’s *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (pages 7-84). Again, both of these core theoretical texts are available as ebooks from Potsdam University the online library catalogue. If you don’t have time to read the Jeffrey’s text this week, continue reading it next week.**
* **Most importantly: *write* creatively in response to the task suggested to you in the tutorial / online last week. Be prepared to share your writing and reflections.**

**Week 4**

**THE WHO – Who’s story is this? Who is the play about? Who is / are the protagonist(s)? Who is / are the antagonist(s)? Who are the characters on stage? Who are the characters off stage? Who is speaking and doing? Who is being spoken to? Who’s voices are heard? Who is silent? Who is missing? Who is present and who is not? Who has the power, how does it shift and how is power used? Who is the play for? Who is represented and how? Who changes? Who do the actors need to be? Think of your own questions of who…**

**Tips of the week:**

**‘Write the story that only you can tell’ – Athol Fugard.**

**Know your characters better than you know yourself. Like you, your characters must change if they are to live.**

**The audience must care about what happens to your characters, this does not mean they need to like them.**

**Theatre is the art of *ubuntu*, the Southern African philosophy that broadly means, I am me through you, you are you through me or I am who I am because you are who you are. Theatre is the art of putting yourself in someone else’s situation. Theatre is the art of empathy.**

**Write the characters that actors will want to play. There is no character without the actor.**

**Topics of the week: We will mainly explore character development and characterisation as well as considering representation, perspective and prejudice in relationship to your audience, with regard to your creative writing and by reflecting on *Master Harold… and the ‘boys’* by Athol Fugard. Be prepared to share your creative writing and reflections.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

* **Watch and early recording of *Master Harold… and ‘the boys’* by Athol Fugard, here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yV_eNQfXgU> **(the play text is available in the library).**
* **Write notes and ask yourself –**
* **Who are the characters? Who is the play about? Who is the protagonist? Who is the antagonist? Who are the characters off stage and how do they inform the characters on stage? Who’s voices are heard? Who is missing? Who has the power, how does it shift and how is power used? Who is the play for? Who is represented and how? What are the significant actions of the characters? Who changes? What emotions do the characters go through? How do the characters make you feel at different points in the play? What does the title tell you about the characters and themes? Why do you think this is the most performed African play in the West (there was another revival of the play at the Royal National Theatre in London in 2019)? What is the transnational appeal of this play, today? How does this play function in post-colonial nation building? Who’s voice do you want to bring to the stage? Who do you want to see represented?**
* **Write your responses on the Moodle pad and join in the discussion with others.**
* **Additional resource (optional viewing): if you are interested in learning more about Fugard’s playwriting process, you could watch this extended interview:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtkbPMd6Mks>
* **Read and reflect on ‘Chapter Five: Dramatic Personae: Constructing the Character’ from our key text *The Secret Life of Plays* by Steve Waters, before the class next week! We will discuss the Chapter in relation to questions of ‘the who’ (above).**
* **Finish reading the Chapter on Structure in Stephen Jeffrey’s *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (pages 7-84) if you haven’t already completed this.**
* **Read the Chapter on Character in Stephen Jeffrey’s *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (pages 85-130)**
* **Writecreatively in response to the task suggested to you in the tutorial / online last week. Be prepared to share your writing and reflections.**

**Week 5 - THE WHERE AND WHEN**

**Where and when does the action take place? Where does the performance take place? Where in the world could this not be performed? When is the time for this work to be produced? How does time and space inform the story? In what ways are the where and the when, a character in your play? Think of your own questions of where and when…**

**Tip of the week: Theatre is the art of human relationships in space and time. Space and time are as much characters in your play as people.**

**Topics of the week: We will explore stage setting, time, location, staging and the theatre space in which work is being presented as well as considering political potency, history and legacy with regard to your creative writing and by reflecting on *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry. Be prepared to share your writing and reflections.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

* **Read: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry (text to be provided online) in relation to questions of ‘the where and the when’.**
* **Write notes: pay close attention to the detailed stage directions in the script and ask yourself –**
* **Where and when is the play set? How do stage directions and descriptions of setting inform all of the other artists and actors working on a play? How does time and space inform the story? In what ways are the where and the when, a character in this play and in your play?**
* **Write your responses on the Moodle pad and join in the discussion with others.**
* **Additional optional viewing: A full feature length version of the play was made into a film in 2008. The script however is much stronger than the film. It can be viewed, here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKj7wcuY6X8> **There is a fantastic 1961 version of this classic play featuring Sidney Poitier and clips are available on YouTube.**
* **Read and reflect on ‘Chapter Three: Writing Space’ and also Chapter Four: Time Codes’ from our key text *The Secret Life of Plays* by Steve Waters. We will discuss the Chapters in relation to questions of ‘the where and the when’.**
* **Writecreatively in response to the task suggested to you in the tutorial / online last week. Be prepared to share your writing and reflections.**

**Week 6**

**THE HOW - How might you structure dialogue, action, scenes, acts and the overall plot? How can language be used? How can style be expressed? How do the characters speak and express themselves? How does staging communicate? How have plays traditionally been structured in The West and how can you undo this and invent your own style? How do you develop *yourself* as a writer? Think of your own questions of how…**

**Tips of the week:**

**‘Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass’ – Anton Chekov**

**Theatre is the art of all art forms – music, dance, literature, visuals, sound, light, storytelling, poetry, digital arts, animation, puppetry, objects, film… Yet theatre is the only art form that can contain all art forms yet as its basis, only needs bodies in time and space.**

**Know the ‘rules’ of playwriting, so you can break them and re-make them – like Ntozake Shange who invented ‘choreopeoetry’, a form that influenced new plays such as *Random* by debbie tucker greene, *Venus* by Suzan Lori Parks, *Chiaruscuro* by Jackie Kay, *Details Cannot Body Wants* by Chin Woon Ping, Moj of the Antarctic by your own tutor and the work of many more international poets and playwrights.**

**Topics of the week: We will explore dramatic structure, shape, rhythm, style, expression, marginalised voices, poetry, linguistic play and experiment with regard to your creative writing and by reflecting on *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange. Be prepared to share your writing and reflections.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

* **Watch: this short clip to give you a visual sense of *For colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* by Ntozake Shange** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lqnuUpAI1c>
* **Read: *For colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* by Ntozake Shange (text to be provided online) and or listen to the text in performance to give you an aural / musical sense of the text in performance:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5T2FXEzmJI> **in relation to questions of ‘the how’.**
* **Take notes as your read and watch and ask yourself:**
* **How is language used in this performance text? How is the play structured? How different is this structure to the other plays you have read on the course? How would you describe the style of this piece? How does staging, music, light, sound and costume communicate? How has Shange invented a new form of playwriting?**
* **Write your responses on the Moodle pad and join in the discussion with others.**
* **Read and reflect on ‘Chapter One: Changing Scenes’ and ‘Chapter Two: Shaping Acts’ and ‘Chapter Six: Powers of Speech: Language as Rhetoric’, from our key text *The Secret Life of Plays* by Steve Waters. We will discuss the Chapter in relation to questions of ‘the how’ (above).**
* **Writecreatively in response to the task suggested to you in the tutorial / online last week. Be prepared to share your writing and reflections.**

**SCHEDULE - PART TWO**

**This part of the course will be very responsive to your individual playwriting projects and is therefore more open and flexible than the first six weeks.**

**Week 7 – PREPARE THE WAY TO WRITE YOUR SHORT PLAY**

**Topic of the week: you are going to spend this week writing a 300-500 word outline plan / ‘pitch’ for the play you are going to write. This should be an idea that you have already started developing over the first six weeks of the course. What you write will change and will hopefully surprise you, but use this task as a basis to get the ideas and direction you want to take, clearer than they are now.**

**Tip of the week: Surprise is the birthplace of creativity. Although you are going to write a plan, it is only a map, it is not the destination. If you do not allow yourself to be surprised, nothing creative will happen. Let go and let the story, characters, scenes, images and words come to and through you.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

* **Write: describe the why (socio-political investigation), what if (premise), what (action), who (characters), where and when (setting), how (form and language(s)) of your play. Submit your 300-500 word outline plan to your tutor online before the next online Zoom tutorial (date to be confirmed). You will receive feedback, guidance and encouragement.**
* **Read and reflect on ‘Chapter Eight: Moving the Audience’ from our key text *The Secret Life of Plays* by Steve Waters, before the class next week! We will discuss the Chapter in relation to your upcoming staged reading assessment.**
* **Start reading: The Chapter ‘How to Write’ in Stephen Jeffrey’s *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (pages 131-190). Continue with this reading next week.**

**WEEK 8 – RESEARCH and WRITE**

**Tip of the week: The art of the writer is the art of the listener. The art of the theatre maker is the art of the observer. As Augusto Boal said, ‘See what you look at’. ‘Listen to what you hear’.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

* **Research your story and characters. Write as you go.**
* **Continue reading: The Chapter ‘How to Write’ in Stephen Jeffrey’s *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (pages 131-190). The readings will help you reflect on your writing.**
* **Start reading: The Chapter ‘What to write’ in Stephen Jeffrey’s *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (pages 191-244).**

**WEEK 9 – KEEP WRITING**

**Tips of the week: Read your work aloud, better still, listen to it aloud. A play does not exist in your head.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

* **Keep writing. Be prepared to read scenes / have scenes read to you and get tutor and peer feedback online.**
* **Continue reading: The Chapter ‘What to write’ in Stephen Jeffrey’s *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (pages 191-244).**

**WEEK 10 – RE-DRAFT**

**Tips of the week:**

**‘I write a lot, over and over again, so that it looks like I never did’ – Toni Morrison.**

**The art of writing is the art of re-writing… and cutting.**

**In preparation for our online Zoom tutorial this week carry out the following tasks:**

* **Keep writing. Be prepared to read scenes / have scenes read to you and get tutor and peer feedback online.**
* **Read: the Epilogue on Re-drafting and ‘Fifteen Dos and Don’t of playwriting’ in Stephen Jeffrey’s *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (pages 245-247 and 257-258).**

**WEEK 11 – WRITE and EDIT**

**Online tutorials will respond to your needs. Make sure you have completed all the reading above.**

**Tips of the week:**

**There is no such thing as a mistake as an artist. ‘Fail again. Fail better’ – Samuel Beckett**

**Don’t leave thinking about the end of your play to the end of your writing process. ‘The end is everything’ – Aristotle**

**WEEK 12 – COURSE EVALUATION and REFLECTIONS**

**Tip of the week:** Celebrate your achievement – you completed the course!

**Extra online tutorials will be offered to teacher training students on their research essay / paper.**

**INDICATIVE COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The following bibliography is an indication of some of the reading we will investigate. Further references will be provided according to your interests. Teacher training students will be provided with a separate list of recommended texts on theatre-in-education, in response to specific research questions.

**Critical texts:**

Goldman, Lisa. *The No Rules Handbook For Writers: Know the Rules So You Can Break Them* (London: Oberon Books, 2012).

Grieg, Noel. *Playwriting: A Practical Guide*, (London: Routledge, 2005).

**Jeffreys, Stephen. *Playwriting: Structure, Character, How and What to Write* (London: Nick Hern books, 2019).**

Waters, Steve. *The Secret Life of Plays,* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2010).

**Play texts**:

Adebayo, Mojisola. *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey* and *Muhammad Ali and Me* in *Mojisola Adebayo: Plays One* (London: Oberon, 2011).

Cho, Julia. *Aubergine* (New York: Dramatists Playwrights Service, 2017).

**Fugard, Athol. *Master Harold… and the ‘boys’* (London: Samuel French, 2010).**

**Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*, (London: Methuen, 2001).**

**Harris, Aleshea. *What Goes Up When Shit Goes Down* (private copy, 2019).**

**Mtwa, Percy, Mbongeni Ngema and Barney Simon. *Woza Albert!* (London: Methuen Drama, 1983).**

**Nottage, Lynn. *Ruined* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2010).**

**Shange, Ntozake. *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow is Enuf,* (New York: Scribner, 2010).**

**Soyinka, Wole. *Death and the King’s Horseman* in Martin Banham and Jane Plastow (eds) *Contemporary African Drama* (London: Methuen, 1999), p 303-390.**

**Taylor, Jane with William Kentridge and the Handspring Puppet Company. *Ubu and the Truth Commission* in Helen Gilbert (ed) *Postcolonial Plays: An Anthology*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p 29-47.**

*Have a fantastic semester, reading, writing and watching plays!*