

INDS 533: Grace and Forgiveness in Contemporary Drama

Chad Wriglesworth

July 1- 5, 2019; 8:30 - 11:30am

1 or 2 graduate credit hours; or 1 audit hour

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In *Performing the Sacred: Theology and Theatre in Dialogue*, theologian Todd Johnson and artistic director Dale Savidge suggest that “theology can be understood through the lens of theatre and that theatre can be understood through the lens of theology.” This course explores the interplay between theology and artistry by attending to ways that contemporary theatre interacts with narrative events of Scripture, the mystery of the incarnation, the communal relationship of the Trinity, and the transforming and dialogical relationship between God and creation. Thematically, we will be particularly attentive to biblical and artistic expressions of grace and forgiveness.

During our week together, we will engage Lucas Hnath’s *The Christians*, Margaret Edson’s *Wit*, Cormac McCarthy’s *The Sunset Limited*, and August Wilson’s *Fences*. We will also witness readings of key scenes interpreted by actors from Pacific Theatre, a professional theatre in Vancouver that “aspires to delight, provoke and stimulate dialogue by producing theatre that rigorously explores the spiritual aspects of human experience.” We will look to gain a richer and more deliberate understanding of the ways that the artistry of our own lives is caught up in the reality of God’s unfolding drama with creation.

SPECIAL NOTE

Students have the option to attend a performance at Bard on the Beach, for which there will be an additional cost. Students wishing to be part of a group rate for this performance must register by March 29.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon the successful completion of this course, students should have a clearer understanding of:

1. Reflect on ways that theatre does theological work by paying attention to matters such as embodiment, representation, and the sense of communal dialogue that is played out artistically in shared moments of time and space.
2. Interpret and explore ways that contemporary playwrights engage Scripture and theological questions through uses of biblical allusions and narrative patterns, representations of church practices and doctrines, and accounts of tensions between belief and unbelief
3. Interpret and explore ways that playwrights, performers, and the broader culture are engaging questions about human desires for justice, grace, and forgiveness in multiple contexts.

COURSE OUTLINE

Day 1 Thinking Theologically about Theatre

Day 2 Lucas Hnath: *The Christians*

Day 3 Margaret Edson: *Wit*

Day 4 Cormac McCarthy: *The Sunset Limited*

Day 5 *August Wilson: Fences*

REQUIRED TEXTS

Margaret Edson, *Wit*. New York: Faber and Faber, 1999. ISBN: 0571198775

Lucas Hnath, *The Christians*. New York: The Overlook Press, 2016. ISBN: 1468310836

Cormac McCarthy, *The Sunset Limited: A Novel in Dramatic Form*. New York: Vintage, 2006. ISBN: 0307278360

August Wilson, *Fences*. New York: Penguin, 1986. ISBN: 0452264014

Please Note: This Course Information Sheet is meant to assist in selecting courses. The official syllabus should be consulted for more detailed information. A full syllabus with drop deadlines, policies, and course assignment details is available on Moodle for registered students: moodle.regent-college.edu/login

