

Course Outline: South African Post Apartheid Theatre

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH | FALL/WINTER 2026-2027

Note for students: This short course outline is provided for planning purposes only. Course information is tentative and subject to change; the final course syllabus will be available by the first day of classes.

Course Code

AP/EN 4425 3.0A (F) – South African Post Apartheid Theatre
Course Director: Prof. Marcia Blumberg

Course Description

The course focuses on close readings of plays, theatrical analyses, and the quality of your own writing. We examine post-apartheid South African theatre from the birth of democracy (1994) to the present. It situates plays historically, aesthetically, theoretically, and politically, analyzes them as social and political interventions, and explores representations of race, class, gender, identity issues, and networks of power. The plays offer complex social analyses and varied theatrical forms. Many problems elided in protest theatre during apartheid are now foregrounded as the plays explore what would previously have been unspeakable issues.

The seminar includes theatrical representations of new directions and voices in Post Apartheid South African theatre; we also study the national drama of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and theatre plays that engaged with this process. The course includes 9 play texts, a theatre production for a review, and a documentary on the TRC. We interrogate significant issues: truth, reconciliation, testimony, witnessing, the politics of memory, violence, trauma, and many unspeakable situations within the plays. We explore how post-apartheid South African theatre challenges a conspiracy of silence and exposes a culture of violence. Theatre has a vital role to play; in South Africa it has an ethical responsibility to examine a fraught world involving many complicated scenarios at a volatile political time.

Course Delivery

Delivery Mode: ONLN – Synchronous (Zoom)

Each Thursday

Classes from 2:30 – 5:20 p.m.

The course combines lecture and tutorial structures. Each week focuses on one play with a power point presentation that can include relevant art slides and political satire, interviews, extracts from productions occasionally a full theatre viewing when I have special presentations to share. I provide brief contexts. Participation is vital so I take attendance and each week there is an informal oral quiz where I note student involvement towards a participation grade. At the end of the course when all the grades are tallied, I add extra participation if there is a cusp grade and there has been regular attendance. I analyse each assignment during a seminar well ahead of time and emphasize my availability to answer queries on email as well as appointments on phone calls.

Course Materials

All texts are reserved at Scott. Many are online.

Davids, Nadia. *What Remains.* 2019 York Bookstore

Farber, Yael. *Mies Julie* 2012 [Yael Farber: Plays One -Scott online read only]

Foot Newton, Lara, *Tshepang: The Third Testament.* 2005. [Scott online read only online]

Fugard, Athol. *The Painted Rocks at Revolver Creek.* 2015. [Scott online-fully printable]

---, **John Kani and Winston Ntshona.** *The Island in Statements* [Scott Online and pdf can be downloaded for *The Island* only]

Handspring Puppet Company. *Woyzeck on the Highveld.*1994 [**Course Kit – York Bookstore**] never been published – needed for your Theatre Review].

Higginson, Craig. *Dream of the Dog* 2010 [York online]

Magnet Theatre. *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking.* [**Course Kit Bookstore**]

Magona, Sindiwe. *Mother-To-Mother* 2023 York Bookstore

Reid, Frances and Deborah Hoffmann. *Long Night's Journey into Day.* Documentary will be shown in class and discussed.

Tentative Grade Breakdown and Deadlines

Assessment	Weight	Mode	Tentative Deadline
Response paper	20%	3-4 pages by email.	Date due Sep 20, 2026

Assessment	Weight	Mode	Tentative Deadline
Theatre review	25%	4 pages by email.	Date due Oct 29, 2026
Comparative research essay	40%	10 pages by email	Date due Nov 26, 2026
Participation	15%	Attendance and class participation	
	100%		

Additional Information

Category:	N/A
Historical Requirements:	N/A
Open To:	YR 4 Hons. (EN, ENPR, CWR students only)