

Course Title: Theatre and Performance in Apartheid South Africa

Instructor: Praise Zenenga

Class Hours: Mondays 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Consultation Hours Wednesdays Noon - 2:00 PM

Office Location: Learning Services Building (LSB) Room

244 **Duration:** 09/23/2019 to 12/09/2019 (10 weeks, 2 hours per week) **E-mail:** zen08@email.arizona.edu

Course Dates: September 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28, November 4, 18, December 2, and 9, 2019 (November 11th off for Veterans Day and the 25th off due to Thanksgiving).

Instructor's Short Bio:

Praise Zenenga is Associate Professor and Director of the Africana Studies Program. He is a theater historian and dramatic literature specialist and his research and teaching focus on interdisciplinary approaches to understanding issues of identity, race, aesthetics, politics, censorship, social change and social justice in the literature and performance of Africa and African Diaspora communities. His articles and book chapters have appeared in internationally renowned journals and University Presses like Oxford, Cambridge and Duke.

Course Description:

“It is generally in culture that the seed of protest, leading to the emergence and development of the liberation movement, is found.” Amilcar Cabral (1977)

This course is an introduction to theatre and performance in Apartheid South Africa. The main focus is the theatre produced during the struggle of the oppressed groups to resist the overall dominance of the apartheid state. Thus, the course particularly focuses on the 1970-1994 era commonly regarded as the period of intense cultural struggle and resistance in South African history. Most significantly, this period signaled the turning point in anti-apartheid struggle, as the predominantly peaceful initial resistance to racism and discrimination metamorphosed into a series of militant and bloody confrontations between the protesting subjugated citizens (black and colored people) and the authorities/establishment (mostly the police). We will examine this struggle not expressly in its political form, but also in its historical, socio-cultural forms as it relates to conjectures of race, class, gender, citizenship and nationality in apartheid South Africa. The course will include the analysis, interpretation and aesthetic appreciation of the different play-texts written by the major playwrights of the period. These playwrights include Mbongeni Ngema, Percy Mtwa, Athol Fugard, Maishe Maponya, Gibson Kente and many others who bravely tackled politically provocative topics such as racial segregation, human rights, restrictive laws and rules, condition of women, workers and children, detention without trial and dehumanizing prison conditions. In addition to straight lectures, activities in this class will also include viewing excerpts of videotaped performances and town-hall style discussions. While invoking both western and African-centered theories of theater and performance, including but not limited to Bertolt Brecht, Peter Brook, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Jerzy Grotowski, Augusto Boal, Ngugi waThiong'o and Wole Soyinka the class offers alternative interpretations and analyzes multiple perspectives that help to enrich our understanding of these unique cultural and political performances. The approaches adopted in this class encourages free expression of the learners' independent thoughts and personal reactions to the assigned plays, readings and audio-visual material.

By the end of the course learners should be:

- Familiar with some major playwrights and their play-texts, performers and theatre companies in Apartheid South Africa.
- Familiar with a variety of, creative trends, performance styles and theatrical forms and practices in South Africa.
- Familiar with some of the political process and historical conditions that have shaped the theatre practice in apartheid South Africa.
- Familiar with the various critical theories and interpretive approaches to African theatrical and performance practices.
- Familiar with the aesthetic values associated with the plays as well the aesthetic choices that playwrights make. This helps learners develop an aesthetic appreciation of the plays and performances produced in apartheid South Africa.

List of Required Play Texts:

Fugard Athol, John Kani, Winston Ntshona, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*

Fugard Athol, *Master Harold and the Boys*

Ngema Mbongeni, Percy Mtwa and Barney Simon, *Woza Albert*

Mtwa Percy, *Bhopa*

Ngema Mbongeni, *Asinamali*

Ngema Mbongeni, *Sarafina*

Ndlovu Duma, *Sheila's Day*

***All play-texts and videos are available electronically and can be accessed ONLINE as Electronic Resources**

Module 1: Monday Sept. 23: Introduction: Background and Context

- “The Apartheid Years, 1948-1973.” A Book Chapter from Roger B. Beck’s *A History of South Africa* (2000) [Available As Electronic Download Online]
- Apartheid (**video**) [Available As Electronic Download Online]

Module 2: Monday Sept. 30: Theater and Apartheid Laws

- Sizwe Bansi is Dead (**text**) [Available As an Electronic Download Online]
- Sizwe Bansi is Dead (**video**) [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Module 3: Monday Oct. 07: Theater and Apartheid (Political Satire)

- Woza Albert (**text**) [Available As an Electronic Download Online]
- Woza Albert (**video**) [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Module 4: Monday Oct. 14: Theater and Racial/Class Segregation

- Master Harold and the Boys (**text**) [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

- Master Harold and the Boys **(video)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Module 5: Monday Oct. 21: Music Performances (Anti-Apartheid Protest)

- Lindsay Michie and Vangeli Gamede “The toyi-toyi was our weapon” : the role of music in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa **(text)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]
- Sun City: Artists United against Apartheid **(video)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Module 6: Monday Oct. 28: Protest Theater (Youth/Student Activism)

- Bhopa **(text)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]
- Bhopa **(video)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Module 7: Monday Nov. 04: Testimonial Theater (Poor Theater)

- Asinamali **(text)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]
- Asinamali **(video)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Module 8: Monday Nov. 18: Poetry Performances (Anti-Apartheid Protest)

- Mzwakhe Mbuli: The People’s Poetry **(video)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]
- Changing Praises: The Imbongi Today **(video)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Module 9: Monday Dec. 02: Women in South African Theater

- Sheila’s Day **(text)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]
- Maids and Madams **(video)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Module 10: Monday Dec. 09: Musical Theater

- Sarafina **(text)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]
- Facing the Truth **(video)** [Available As an Electronic Download Online]

Happy Holidays ☺