

CONTEMPORARY BLACK PLAYWRIGHTS: WILSON, NOTTAGE, PARKS

Coordinators: Marian Lamin and Dolores Dean Walker

This course explores the works of three Pulitzer Prize-winning playwrights: the poetic realism of August Wilson, the multi-faceted explorations of Lynn Nottage, and the explosive creativity of Suzan-Lori Parks. We begin with an overview of the early history of Black theater, the Harlem Renaissance, and the contributions of realistic plays of the 1950s and protest dramas of the 1960s leading to the experimental works of the present. Class members develop knowledge of the wide variety of theatrical forms used and examine the socio/political roots influencing the individual playwright. Most important: we get to know the works of these talented dramatists. In class, scenes are enacted, students provide reports on other playwrights, and plays are analyzed based on discussion and questions emailed in advance.

Readings and other Materials/Online Services:

Wilson, August, *Three Plays*, University of Pittsburgh Press, ISBN 08229-36666

Nottage, Lynn, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy and Other Plays*, {Theater Communications Group, 2003, ISBN: ISBN-10 1559362146, ISBN-13 978-1559 362}.

Nottage, Lynn, *Intimate Apparel/Fabulation*, {Theater Communications Group, 2006, paperback, ISBN-10: 15593672790, ISBN-13: 978-155936275}.

Wilson, August, *The Piano Lesson*, {(Toni Morrison forward) Plume/Penguin Group, 2014 edition, ISBN: 978-0452-26534-9}.

Nottage, Lynn, a new play TBA.

Parks, Suzan-Lori, *TopDog/UnderDog*, {Theater Communications Group, ISBN13-978-1-55936}.

Parks, Suzan-Lori, *The America Play and Other Works*, {Theater Communications Group, ISBN 13-978-1-55436-092}.

Marian Lamin , a writer and editor, has coordinated study groups on short stories, great novellas, the Group Theater, and American writers in Paris.

Dolores Dean Walker coordinated *HUAC: Playwrights and Filmmakers*, and *Contemporary American Woman Playwrights*. She has taught at John Jay College and is a member of the Dramatists Guild and a former member of the Actors Equity Assn.

******* Syllabus - A Work in Progress *******

- Week 1: Black theatre history
- Week 2: Wilson, Fences
- Week 3: Wilson, Fences
- Week 4: Wilson, Piano Lesson
- Week 5: Wilson, Piano Lesson
- Week 6: Wilson, Joe Turner's Come and Gone
- Week 7: Wilson, Joe Turner
- Week 8: Nottage, excerpts from early plays
- Week 9: Nottage: new play TBA
- Week 10: Nottage, new play
- Week 11: Nottage, Intimate Apparel
- Week 12: Parks, TopDog/UnderDog
- Week 13: Parks, TopDog/UnderDog and one act play TBA