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THEA 141: Introduction to Theatre Studies

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Michelle Gibbs

School Of Theatre Arts

International And Global Studies Program,

Small Grant Application - Fall, 2021

I am applying for an IGS Small Grant to support the development of a revised assignment in THEA 141: Introduction to Theatre Studies. The assignment is a digital humanities project about Evelina Fernández three-part play cycle *A Mexican Trilogy: Faith, Hope, and Charity*. Students work in teams to develop an online repository of teaching materials related to the play and contextualized for an audience of 6th – 8th graders at Bloomington-Normal middle schools. This assignment is a revised version of the current assignment in THEA 141.

The assignment is a module that students will complete for seven weeks leading up to the end of the semester. In groups of 3-4 students, they will imagine they are dramaturgs working for a non-profit theatre company. The artistic director would like to create outreach materials to attract local schools. Each group will create a visual, text-based, and oral digital assignment. Students will give a short presentation at the end of the semester about the efficacy of the work as an online resource. The reasons for the shift from one assignment to a module are:

- Revise the assignment goals to be more inclusive of the course learning objectives and outcomes related to identity, difference, and belonging.
- Create a scaffolded approach for student access and development.
- Create a module that has real-world application and can be used as a community outreach tool.

The overall goal of the module is to build upon our existing conversations about cultural and ethnic identities, transculturation, the study theatre, and theatre-making as a practice that are already embedded in the course. The module is the experiential component. The learning objectives are for students to:

- Identify, analyze, and evaluate the historical, cultural, social, and political perspectives tied to conversations about Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicano identities.
- Identify, analyze, and evaluate the contemporary philosophical contexts that have shaped the plays.

- Develop and practice the ability to listen and speak thoughtfully and contextually about the play in context.

The module is visually, textually, and orally scaffolded into smaller digestible assignments in order for students to see and experience the broad overview.

The module learning outcome is to increase students' capacity for empathy and understanding for cultural identities that may not be their own. This outcome supports the IGS learning objectives in that:

- The module assignments promote conversation about transnationalism and transculturalism in the plays and help students develop their ability to comprehend and appreciate Mexican, Mexican American, and characters that self-identify as Chicano cultural identities.
- The module assignments promote conversations about the interconnectedness of lived experiences among Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicano people.
- The module assignments develop students' ability to critically reflect on their cultural, ethnic, and racial experiences as a way to see their own place in a globalized world through a variety of analytical lenses.

Michelle Gibbs

School Of Theatre Arts

IGS Small Grant Application, Fall, 2021

Revised Module: A Mexican Trilogy - Digital Humanities Project

About this Assignment. Imagine that you are a dramaturg for a non-profit theatre company. Your company is producing Evelina Fernández three-part play cycle *A Mexican Trilogy: Faith, Hope, and Charity*. The artistic director of the company has asked you to develop some creative ways to engage young audiences in grades 6-8. In groups, you will develop an online repository of teaching materials for social studies and language arts educators in Bloomington-Normal Schools. You will give a short presentation of your work at the end of the semester.

Week 1 – 2

Learning Objective: Identify, analyze, and evaluate the historical, cultural, social, and political perspectives tied to conversations about Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicano identities.

1. Timeline JS – A Mexican Trilogy, Charity
 - Each group (3-4 students) will contextualize 3-4 major historical events that led up to AMT: Charity. Please include primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, images and/or videos, and text that describes the moment and why they are significant.

Week 3 – 4

Learning Objective: Develop and practice the ability to listen and speak thoughtfully and contextually about the play in context to historical, cultural, social, and political perspectives tied to conversations about Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicano identities.

2. Audio Podcast – America's Song Book: A Historical Overview of Music Styles in A Mexican Trilogy, Faith
 - Each group (3-4 students) will research and present 1-2 songs and their significance to the play in a discussion-based audio conversation for a grades 6-9 audience.
 - Develop discussion questions and one interactive activity.

Week 5 – 6

Learning Objective: Identify, analyze, and evaluate the contemporary philosophical contexts that have shaped the plays.

3. Study Guide: A Mexican Trilogy, Hope: A Cultural, Social, and Political Overview
 - Each group (3-4 students) will create a .pdf study guide.
 - Each group will provide one contemporary cultural, social, or political context for one major moment of conflict or one character relationship in the play.
 - Include one theory capsule that can help nuance the cultural, social, and political context of the play.

- Develop discussion questions and one interactive activity.

Grading Rubric. This assignment is worth 50 percent of your grade in the course. You will be assessed based on the following:

- Creativity and Inventiveness: design style and approach, engaging quality of the project, etc.
- Content and Resources: content accuracy, utilization of the project as a resource, and site stability.
- Written Work: completed written assignments as stated in guidelines.
- Presentation: demonstrated knowledge of the project, clear and coherent thought, dress code, and compelling engagement with the audience.

Final Exam: Dramaturgy Project

About this Assignment. Imagine that you are a dramaturg for a non-profit theatre company. Your company is producing the musical, *Head Over Heels*. The artistic director of the company has asked you and several of your co-workers to develop some creative ways to engage young audiences 9th-12th grade and 9th -12th educators that will attend several of the performances.

You will work as a group to develop a digital study guide. Your website should include:

1. Sample marketing poster on the home page.
2. One-page group statement of intent. Describe your project and its efficacy as a resource to theatre for young audiences. Think of this as your opportunity to speak directly to your audience who are vibrant theatre-lovers!
3. A historical overview of the play's premiere production.
 - Premier production details
 - How did audiences receive of the play?
 - What was the political climate like in the United States when this play premiered?
 - What are the themes of the play? How does the playwright make these relevant to the historical moment for which the play premiered?
4. Brief playwright biography within the context of the musical
5. Pretend you are a designer for the production. Include one signature design element (i.e. costumes, scenic, lighting, and sound). Please include design renderings with description.
6. Interview with "a member of the production team" This can be real or imaginary.
7. Educator discussion topics and activities.
 - This can be anything you would like to propose to educators as study aids for engaging in discussions with students. For example, you could propose to include in your project an idea for a podcast for 9-12 graders. You would include a sample script template. You could create a "Kahoot" or another trivia game. Whatever you do, please make sure to describe it in words. In presentation, you can give us (the class) a demonstration.
8. Suggested reading list of books and articles related to the play. Please include at minimum five sources.
9. Works cited page.

Guidelines.

- Your digital project should be vibrant, creative, imaginative, and include text and images.
- This project must live online and include citations for all content. We will review this more in class.

Presentation.

- You will present your project on the final exam day, Wednesday, Dec. 8 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Please be prepared to discuss your project at length. Presentations should not exceed 40 minutes. Each group member is expected to participate in the presentation.
- Please prepare your presentations in a way to presents coherent thought on your part. Represent the work honestly and with integrity.
- Clearly prepared and rehearsed recitation. Notecards are optional. Smooth and rehearsed transitions between presenters. Eye contact with audience. Respectfully addressing and supporting group members. Warm, open, and inviting manner of addressing the audience.

Grading Rubric. This assignment is worth 30 percent of your grade in the course. You will be assessed based on the following:

- Creativity and Inventiveness: design style and approach, engaging quality of the project, etc.

- Content and Resources: content accuracy, utilization of the project as a resource, and .pdf stability.
- Written Work: completed written assignments as stated in guidelines.
- Presentation: demonstrated knowledge of the project, clear and coherent thought, and compelling engagement with the audience.