

History 30200/Theater 39000
Hamilton: History, Artistry, Impact
Spring Semester 2019
Tuesday and Thursday 11:30-1:20 PM
Tuesday Pao 2154
Thursday Pao B157

John. L. Larson
Univ. 225
phone: 494-4127
e-mail: larsonjl@purdue.edu

Amy Lynn Budd
Pao 2185
(765) 494-3806
abudd@purdue.edu

Objectives: This course is a collaboration between History and Theater to explore the Broadway phenomenon that is “Hamilton.” Lin-Manual Miranda’s hip-hop historical romp, built on the unlikely story of America’s first Treasury Secretary, **featuring** a black and brown cast playing the most famous Founding Fathers, took America by storm three years ago, swept the Tony Awards, and broke box office records for months on end with tickets *starting* above \$500 a pop and often topping 5 times as much. (While banned from the NFL Tom Brady and Gisele even took in a show.)

“Hamilton” blends authentic historical material with 21st century pop culture, racial discourse, and rich footings in the conventions of musical theater, giving us a unique opportunity to explore the art form, the message, and its impact. To that end we will be probing this phenomenon from several different angles: historical analysis, musical genre, theatrical conventions, design, dance, and artistic objective. During the semester you will read, write, do research, compose, and perform in an effort to appreciate the complexity of intersections represented by this show.

Our objectives are simple even if the show is complex. We want you to think about the history that is conveyed by the show—what it says and what it means. We want you to think about the show as an art form—what impression it makes and how it makes that impression. We want you to think about why it matters—how the mixing and mashing of academic history, race, hip-hop, theater, song, and dance together create a “thing” that seems to be so important that millions of dollars have been spent on tickets to see the show. (That’s somewhat more than we get paid to teach the course 😊.)

Strategies: To accomplish these objectives we will be using the **soundtrack** to the show, Lin-Manual Miranda’s own book, *Hamilton—The Revolution*, Ron Chernow’s *Hamilton* (the main inspiration for Miranda’s project), and a variety of smaller readings available on Blackboard. We meet Tuesday and Thursday of each week. Usually Thursday will be lecture/discussion primarily led by Larson; Tuesday will be studio primarily led by Budd. The two are closely interlinked however, and you should not think of it as two parallel classes. Class attendance truly is essential. Please clear any conflicts or absences with us in advance if possible.

Assignments and Grading: grades are based on project work and class participation as follows:

50 points—Essay Exam

25—Research Presentation (10 minutes)

50—Work in progress presentation of final (Nov. 1)

100—Discussion participation

130—Studio activities

(10 points/wk for 13 weeks: no points week 1, spring break, or work in progress showing week 11)

100—Final Performance (50 writing/50 presentation)

455 points possible

Exams: There will be one “ordinary” exam near the middle of the term based on historical readings and discussions to that date. This will be an essay exam, in class, answering a question we will determine the week before the exam. This exam is mostly to make sure you are digging into the material and to nudge you in the direction of thinking and writing about what we are doing. Exam = 50 points

Research Presentation: you will give a 10-12 minute presentation on one of Lin-Manuel-Miranda’s creative influences in the creation of *Hamilton*. Topics will be assigned the second week of class. These chiefly include musical theatre artists and hip-hop artists. Your presentation should include song and video clips to deepen your audience’s (us) understanding of cultural context of Miranda’s work.*

Final Projects: Each of you will pick a historical figure (from before 1950) about whom you will do some research and craft an “I AM” song (like track 1 of *Hamilton*) OR an “I WANT” song (like track 3) using whatever information, musical genre, design, and theatrical framework you like. Over the course of the semester you will make progress reports on this activity; during finals week we will ask you to perform your composition. Your final exam also will include a brief explanation of the “history, artistry, and impact” of your project. Final presentation=100 points. Required work in progress presentation=50 points*

Participation and Studio Activities: points are awarded at the discretion of instructors. You cannot earn points if you are not present in class. Studio activities, especially in the first 8 weeks, are designed to build skills you will need to execute the final project. Bring your thoughts, questions, opinions to every discussion. Arrive at class alert and engage fully with each activity. Do not throw away your shot.

* If course enrollment is high, these assignments may be partner projects instead of individual projects. Details TBD.

Grades: Your final grade will be based on your percentage of earned points out of a total of 465 (see above) according to the following scale:

93-100%	= A	73-76	= C
90-92	= A-	70-72	= C-
87-89	= B+	67-69	= D+
83-86	= B	63-66	= D
80-82	= B-	60-62	= D-
77-79	= C+	<60	= F

Attendance and courtesy: This is a small interactive class, and attendance is essential. Unexcused absences will seriously affect your grade. If you have conflicts please see one of us at the earliest possible time. Do not bring laptops or phones to sessions unless specifically instructed to do so. We want your attention and engagement in the moment, not in cyberspace. Disruptive, rude, or inflammatory comments or behaviors are not consistent with Purdue's standards of academic conduct, and you may be asked to leave the class as a result of such infractions. You've got to be in the room where it happens.

Attire for Studio Classes (Tuesdays): You are required to wear clothing that allows free movement. Bring a change of clothes or shoes if needed. Failure to come to class appropriately dressed will affect your studio activity grade that day. Workout clothes are fine, as are casual clothes that are not restrictive. Please wear sneakers or flat dance shoes in the studio. **Bare feet, stocking feet, and flip flops are not allowed on the studio floors. Students without appropriate footwear will not be allowed to participate in some activities. This is for your safety.** Dr. Larson and Prof. Budd have no desire to pull splinters out of your feet. Gross.

Emergency Announcement: *In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course:*

email larsonjl@purdue.edu
office phone 494.4127
John's cell phone 765.412.9166.

email abudd@purdue.edu
office 494.3806
Amy's cell 401.965.5198

Calendar of Assignments
Hamilton: History, Artistry, Impact

(Do influence presentations 1-2 per class starting week 3.)

Week 1

- Jan 8 Lecture: Thinking historically?
 -fact and fiction, then and now, story and impact
- Jan 10 Video: PBS special on *Hamilton* 90 minutes

Week 2

- Jan 15 Studio: Setting the stage theatrically (Act I, tracks 1-5)
 -start up activities and discussion
 -Discussion of: Miranda/McCarter Intro and Ch. 1-3, 5, 12, 31
 (pp.10-37, 46-51, 102-105, 270-275)
 -Assign topics and for presentation
- Jan 17 Lecture: Setting the stage historically: Liberation
 -what the revolutionary generation thought they were doing
 -read Larson, “Liberation” on Blackboard
 -start Chernow, *Hamilton*
 -plan to finish Chernow before the exam October 25

Week 3

- Jan 22 Sound and Genre: What makes a powerful sound? (Act I, tracks 6-10)
 -Miranda/McCarter Ch. 6, 8, 11, 20, 21(on Nevin Stenberg), 22
 (pp. 52-57, 68-77, 94-101, 172-180, 184-204)
 -Discussion of chapters/activities on sound
- Jan 24 Lecture: “In New York you can be a new man.” (Act I, tracks 1-5)
 -Short past—long future
 -Why not Boston? Virginia?
 -New man, young man, looking for trouble?

Week 4

- Jan 29 Studio: **Acting the Song**
 -special guest ?
 -Miranda/McCarter Ch. 7, 10, 13, 20, 24, 27, 30
 (pp. 58-59, 88-90, 107-109, 172-175, 214-217, 263-265)
- Jan 31 Studio: Language: rhymes and beyond (Act I, tracks 11-15)
 -Miranda/McCarter Ch. 9 (pp. 78-87), other reading TBA
 -assonance, consonance, alliteration and more
 -what do language devices DO?

Week 5

- Feb 5 Lecture: “Lookin’ for a Mind at Work” (Act I, tracks 5, 9-11, 13-14)
-gender—traditions and unrest
-courtship, marriage, family, connection, friendship
-empowerment? Is this why we need a war? Shake things up?
-read documents on Blackboard: “Charlie’s Courtship”
- Feb 7 Lecture: Monarchy, real and imagined (Act I, tracks 6-7)
-Divine right, English constitution, republican monarchy
-governance of the empire
-the argument for independence; the argument against

Week 6

- Feb 12 Studio: Language, culture, empathy: an intersectional approach
-Reading TBA
-Hip Hop guest presentation and activities
-Historical figures for final project due for approval
- Feb 14 Lecture: Republicanism: Virtue and Ambition, Hero and His Disguises
-idea of republicanism, civic virtue, disinterestedness
-problem of ambition
-self-interest and heroic activity—can you imagine a selfless hero?

Week 7

- Feb 19 Studio: Design: Evocative and Period
-Miranda/McCarter Ch. 4, 14, 26
(pp. 38-40, 112-117, 225-228)
-In class image research and sharing—bring your devices!
- Feb 21 Lecture: History has its eyes on you? (Act I, track 19)
-does “history” have eyes?
-patriots or terrorists?
-how does purposeful action become “history”??

Week 8

- Feb 26 Lecture: Surviving the War / Winning the war (Act I, track 18-21)
-different theaters of conflict—major battles
-starving Washington’s army
-civil war inside the conflict
-emancipation and black fighters
-importance of foreign “meddling”
-read documents on Blackboard: “Civil War”
- Feb 28 Studio: The Broadway show as day-to-day workplace
-special guest pending

Week 9

- Mar 5 Studio: Dance: Part 1 “Moments that the words don't reach”
(bring your water bottle)
-How does it contribute to storytelling?
-Miranda/McCarter Ch. 16, 21 (pp. 132-147, 180-185)
-other reading TBA (Kat)
-Let's try some!
- Mar 7 Lecture: Challenge of State Making (Act I, tracks 21-23)
-state constitutions
-Confederation
-Constitution and ratification
-read on Blackboard: Articles, Constitution, Federalist

SPRING BREAK!!!

Week 10

- Mar 19 Studio: Dance: Part 2 “Work!”
(bring your water bottle)
-Continue process from last week
-No reading
-How might you make movement decisions for our final project?
- Mar 21 Exam and discussion: What has the Revolution accomplished?
What has the show accomplished?

Week 11

- Mar 26 Studio: Back to our roots
-Finish influence presentations
-No reading
-Reflection/Discussion:
How does Lin enter and process the world?
How do you?
How are you using what you've learned in your own work?
- Mar 28 Lecture: Liberty, Equality, Race, and Remembrance
-who's in who's out?
-deference and prerogative—slow death of elite assumptions
-democratization—slow rise of popular initiative
-what about race: the irony of liberating white folks

Week 12

- Apr 2 Studio: Works in Progress
-first drafts of songs, staging and design work
-feedback and planning for next several weeks

- Apr 4 Lecture: Learning to govern (Act II, tracks 1-12)
 -Washington administration
 -Hamilton's goals
 -opponents' complaints
 -geese and gander—the conflicts of interest

Week 13

- Apr 9 Studio: *Hamilton* as Cultural Juggernaut Part 2
 -Forebears and impacts (already *Hamilton* has changed things!)
 -How has theatre reflected and influenced race relations over time?
 -Does everyone agree that *Hamilton* is a positive force?
 -Miranda/McCarter Ch. 18, 28, 29
 (pp. 156-160, 250-252, 256-257)

- Apr 11 Lecture: Inventing party politics (Act II, tracks 13-22)
 -standing for office—the statesman ideal
 -running for office—craven ambition
 -virtual and actual representation
 -Jefferson's disingenuous game
 -cat's out of the bag (election of 1800)

Week 14

- Apr 16 Studio: *Hamilton* as Cultural Juggernaut Part 1
 -Context in theatre history
 -Perspectives on casting
 -Miranda/McCarter Ch. 17, 23, 27
 (pp. 148-151, 205-208, 240-244)

- Apr 18 TBA/contingency

Week 15

- Apr 23 Studio : group warm-up and partnered rehearsals
 -Final project

- Apr 25 Lecture: Honor killing (Act I, track 15, Act II, track 22)
 -dueling as an American tradition

Finals week April 29-May 4

Presentations of projects

Date/time TBD