

Veranstalter.....	Prof. Dr. L. Berkman, Fulbright Senior Specialist Professor
Thema	Individual and Aggregate Voices in North American Drama [AA- V4a/b, ENG-13, AA-M14, AA-M15, AA-M16, AA-MA3, AA-MA4, AA-W]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-568
Zeit.....	2st Juni/ Juli 2014
Raum.....	
Beginn.....	Blockseminar

Course Description:

Context: When Gertrude Stein, early in her career, set out to record her interviews with as many individuals as she could corral, aiming (impossibly, of course) to collect and demonstrate the infinite spectrum of personalities and voices that comprise one nation -- in this instance the United States of America -- she was already tapping her hunger to encounter, grasp, and evoke the known, unknown, definable and inexpressible elements, that make each of us -- whatever our kindred ingredients -- unique, and that our languages can at best hint at, not contain. Stein's *THE MAKING OF AMERICANS* resulted from and demonstrated her incomplete campaign, just as her *MELANCTHA* embodied her valiant, indeed glorious even if doubtful, attempt to speak in the voice not only of another soul than herself but in the voice of another 'race'. (Stein was hardly alone in this effort: Eugene O'Neill, just to cite one other early 20th century American author, was likewise, years after these two 'novels' of Stein's, to give us a major character of color in his play, *THE EMPEROR JONES*. Stein herself ultimately strove to 'transcend' color, as when her plays and operas departed from any assumption of race and even character specificity, as in her youthful play *WHAT HAPPENED* and even in her more mature *FOUR SAINTS IN THREE ACTS*, enabling its premiere Broadway cast to be entirely African American without any basis for 'realists' to object.)

Accordingly, I propose a series of seminar or workshop sessions, each of which springs from a separate -- though climactically interrelated -- sphere of 'voice'. Wherever pertinent, especially for sessions two through six, we will include in our discussion the components of 'voice' we may deem 'stereotypical' in portraying the community or culture that serves as that session's pivot, contrasted with the components of 'voice' we see as departures from 'the stereotypical' or utterly outside that familiar realm. The session foci would be as follows:

Session One: Creating languages. An examination of distinctive U.S. and Canadian playwrights whose work looks beyond what might be considered the 'common' dialogue-styles of their compatriots. Playwrights who, like Stein, Marie-Irene Fornes, Adrienne Kennedy and others in the U.S., Judith Thompson, George F. Walker, Sky Gilbert and others in Canada, 'invent' the language of their plays rather than 'reflect' or 'represent' the language of what might be perceived as the observed and remembered 'everyday parlance' of their families, friends, neighbors, regions, and, of course, too, themselves 'in life'.

Session Two: The language of 'class'. An examination of how 'voice' operates in plays that aim to distinguish characters of wealth, education, and status from characters who are disenfranchised in these and other regards. The drama of Philip Barry, Lillian Hellman, George Kaufman & Moss Hart, Robert Anderson, and Edward Albee, to cite potential examples, will be set beside the drama of John Steinbeck, Erskine Caldwell, John Herbert, Sarah Ruhl, and David Lindsay-Abair.

Sessions Three and Four: The language of 'ethnicity' and 'race'. An examination of select instances of 'voice' in African-American drama, in Asian-American drama, in Latino/a drama, in Jewish-American drama. Among playwrights to be examined for kinship and contrasts here: Lorraine Hansberry, LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, Lynn Nottage, Nilaja Sun, David Henry Hwang, Philip KanGotanda, Velina Hasu Houston, Milcha Sanchez-Scott, Migdalia Cruz, Jose Rivera, Wendy Wasserstein, Donald Margulies, and Jessica Litwak.

Sessions Five and Six: The language of 'gender'. An investigation into the issues of 'gendered' voice, as regards presumable identification both of female and male playwrights' voices and of female and male character voices, inclusive of transgendered and 'queer' characters whose 'gender identity' is transcended or indeterminate. Playwrights studied in these two sessions will range from Tennessee Williams to Michel Tremblay, Annie Baker, Douglas Wright, Amy Herzog, Patricia Wettig, Taylor Mac, Carey Perloff, and Daniel Talbott