

Fall 2017
HONORS 1953H-911
HONORS PROGRAM FIRST YEAR SEMINAR
Thematic Title: *Lin-Manuel Miranda's Hamilton*
F 2:00-3:15 PM
Lalumiere Language Hall 310

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Office Hours: MWF 12:50 PM-1:50 PM or by appointment

This 12-week course is devoted to interdisciplinary study of Lin-Manuel Miranda's smash musical *Hamilton*, looking at the play from a variety of disciplinary perspectives: literary studies, history, cultural studies, theater studies, fine arts, and more. Closely studying the musical first in its entirety and then moving through it track-by-track, we will also explore the unexpectedly wide impact of *Hamilton* in the larger world of popular culture and national politics, including (in multiple ways) the 2016 presidential election. Why *Hamilton*? Why *this* *Hamilton*? And why now? *Hamilton's* immense popularity, its rich intertextuality, and its incredible internal structural complexity make it a perfect opportunity to become acquainted with academic methods that will, I hope, serve you well across the rest of your time at Marquette and beyond.

LEARNING GOALS

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify, discuss, and understand various formal characteristics of musicals, particularly *Hamilton*;
- Apply techniques of critical analysis to musicals in general, and *Hamilton* in particular;
- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural and historical contexts in which *Hamilton* was written and produced, and in which it rose to such prominence;
- Discuss *Hamilton's* relationship to the actual history of the Founding Fathers, as well as its relationship to current political debates and events;
- Use media study and cultural analysis to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Read and discuss *Hamilton* on the levels of both form and content.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* (soundtrack)

Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*

- The Chernow book will be used to *supplement* our discussions; please don't be put off by its size!

Moana (2017) will be screened in class. All other readings will be provided via D2L.

GRADES AND EXPECTATIONS

This is a pass/fail course, which means your work will be evaluated outside the usual disciplinary framework of graded assignments. But this fact, and the fact that our chosen object of study is a hip-hop musical, should not be misunderstood to mean that our collective project is somehow frivolous or unimportant. The lack of grades is an exciting and rare opportunity for us to work and learn together in a more egalitarian context than the typical college classroom—*not* an excuse for you to blow this class off or fail to take it seriously.

THAT BEING SAID

This is a course about a musical (which is meant to be fun!) that is itself intended to be fun. What will make this class most fun, and most useful to you as emerging scholars, is a shared dedication to diving into this experience and getting the most we can get out of it together.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is the key component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it. **Consequently, attendance in this class is absolutely mandatory.** You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>. You are allowed **two absences** over the course of the fall semester. **Upon the third unexcused absence, you will receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.**

Merely being present in class is insufficient to earn a passing grade. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

D2L FORUMS

In addition to class discussion, the other major evaluative component of this course is the forum at <http://d2l.mu.edu/>. In addition to being a place where you can find electronic copies of the syllabus and other course handouts, D2L will be a place where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over.

The D2L forums are an excellent place for people who may feel inhibited by in-class discussion to share their opinions with the class.

Before class next Friday, every student is required to upload a picture of their face to their D2L profile, and post a short, 250-word reaction to *Hamilton*, Act One. After that, students should write **one post per week** across the remainder of the course. (You can miss up to two if you need to.) At a minimum, posts should contain **a comment** you wanted to make about the assigned material, **a question** you had and wanted to raise in our class discussion, and **an “Easter egg”** you noticed while you were listening. These posts should be completed by 1 PM before the class discussion devoted to that text. Additional posts beyond the requirement, and posts that respond substantively to other students' arguments, are of course strongly encouraged.

EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less.

LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem. No use of cell phones will be permitted during class time except for emergencies or on rare occasions for legitimate class purposes; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they may require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met.

I am of course more than happy to work with you to make sure you are successful in this course and to make this course most accessible for you. However, without documentation, I am limited in what I am able to do. Therefore, in order for me to help you most effectively, I need you to be proactive in contacting Marquette University's Office of Disability Services (located on the fifth floor of the 707 Building). ODS can be reached by phone at (414) 288-1645 or by email at ods@marquette.edu.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Full details of Marquette's academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#academichonestypolicy>.

On a personal level, I (like everyone) hate being lied to. Please, do not feel you need to concoct elaborate stories. Simply be honest with me about whatever is going on and we will work it out.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN!

I want this class to be a meaningful and valuable experience for you. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or concerns about the way things are going, my door is always open.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class as they become necessary.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed texts or chapters.

	DATE	TEXTS
F	Sep 1	FIRST DAY OF CLASS <i>Hamilton's America</i> [PBS]
F	Sep 8	<i>Hamilton</i> (Act One) "Hamilton, Inc." [Web]
F	Sep 15	<i>Hamilton</i> (Act Two) "Hamilton and History: Are They in Sync?" [Web] "A Hamilton Skeptic on Why the Show Isn't as Revolutionary as It Seems" [Web] "The Intense Debates Surrounding <i>Hamilton</i> Don't Diminish the Musical — They Enrich It" [Web]
F	Sep 22	Track by Track: "Alexander Hamilton" through "Farmer Refuted" Chernow: "The Castaways" through "The Collegian"
F	Sep 29	Track by Track: "You'll Be Back" through "Stay Alive" Chernow: "The Pen and the Sword" through "The Little Lion"
F	Oct 6	Track by Track: "Ten Duel Commandments" through "Nonstop" Chernow: "A Frenzy of Valour" through "Publius"

F	Oct 13	Track by Track: “What I’d Miss?” through “One Last Time” Chernow: “Putting the Machine into Motion” through “Sugar Plums and Toys”
F	Oct 20	FALL BREAK—NO CLASS
F	Oct 27	Track by Track: “I Know Him” through “Burn” Chernow: “Spare Cassius” through “Deadlock”
F	Nov 3	Track by Track: “Blow Us All Away” through “Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story” Chernow: “A World Full of Folly” through “Epilogue: Eliza” and “Prologue: The Oldest Revolutionary War Widow”
F	Nov 10	MOVIE: <i>Moana</i> (2017) (in class)
F	Nov 17	Discussion: <i>Moana</i> (2017) LAST DAY OF CLASS

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(search for “Undergraduate English at Marquette”)

On Twitter: @MarquetteFAME

I will also be inviting you to events in the pop culture and pizza series I run periodically during the semester. I hope you can attend!