GSWS 323-4: STT: Gender and Performance
Staging Gender and Identity in Biographical Drama

Professor: Dr. Sasha Colby
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Office: HC 2407 (Suite 2400)
Office hours: Tuesdays 17:20 - 18:20; Wednesdays 16:20 – 17:20 or by appointment at HC
Lecture: Tuesdays 13:30 – 17:20; HC 1415

Course Description:
During this course, students will study plays and films about writers and historical figures in order to learn the structures of drama that they themselves will use in researching and writing a play based in the autobiographical materials of a figure of their own choosing. In a respectful workshop environment, students will refine their plays and perform a scene from their own work at the end of term. In addition to the creative component of the course, we will consider various theoretical aspects of performing gender and identity, including strategies of self-narration, the formation of fictive selves, and the performance of identity in everyday life.

Educational Goals:
By the end of term, students will have had an immersive experience in both thinking about and embodying ideas of gender performance and various forms of self-staging.

Course Texts and Courseware:
- Sarah Ruhl, Dear Elizabeth (unpublished; authorized copies available from instructor)
- Sigmund Freud, Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria 978-0684829463
- Tom Dulack, Incommunicado 978-0822205654
- Sarah Ruhl, Dear Elizabeth 978-0865478152
- Custom courseware containing Hélène Cixous’ Portrait of Dora (play) and a variety of theoretical articles.

Films and live theatre production:
- Julie Taymor, dir. Frida (in class)
- Julie Harris (stars) The Belle of Amherst (youtube filming; out of class)
- Theatre ticket to one professional production

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Author/Artist presentation 10%  Statement of Intent 20%  Participation and reading 15%
Play-script 35%  Staging 20%
(Note: With instructor permission, there may be latitude to organize an alternative marking scheme for those who would prefer to complete assignments differently i.e. without a performance component).

Prerequisite: 15 units