



Spring 2021 Honors Seminar
Women's Work: Moving Beyond *Evelyn Brown*
Dr. Gwendolyn Alker
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THEA UT 801.001--4 credits
Day and Time: TBA

This Honors Seminar will use Maria Irene Fornés's little known play, *Evelyn Brown*, as an entry into a larger discussion of women's labor. Fornés, one of the most influential, yet least well-known American dramatists of the twentieth century, sourced *Evelyn Brown* from the diary of an early 20th century New England domestic servant. The play was professionally performed one time in 1980 at the Theatre for a New City. The class will explore the relation of *Evelyn Brown* to Fornés' larger body of work and her prescient observations of and questions about labor and gender in her *oeuvre*. By implication, the script invites us to ask how a play that simply portrays the mundane labor of a household worker should be performed and staged today.

The class will situate a foundational study of Fornés in the context of theatre artists who focus on questions of labor in the creation and content of their work. We will then turn to the contemporary implications of "women's work" in the context of global neoliberalism. Finally, we will complete the semester by asking whether or not the frame of women's work allows us to understand our own roles as cultural laborers and consumers today. Scholars and artists may include Maria Irene Fornés, Caryl Churchill, Naomi Wallace, David Levine, Nick Ridout,

Patricia Ybarra, Cynthia Enloe, Anna Tsing, Nancy Fraser, Herb Childress, Sylvia Federici, Angela Davis, Chandra Talpade Mohanty among others.