

SYLLABUS - PLAY ANALYSIS ST 497

Room: PAC 112

Instructor: Professor Christian Casper

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Office Hours: T-Th 1-3pm, By Appointment

Office Location:

I. Course Description:

As a fundamental skill, actors, directors, and designers working in play production must have methods, and techniques for accessing the meaning behind the text of play scripts. While not all productions will start from a play script, the ability to base production decisions on a deep understanding of the text is crucial. A production, like the text itself contains many interconnecting parts and relationships: Script Analysis requires close examination of these parts for the purposes of understanding and interpretation.

This semester, we will explore some important elements for analyzing and deciphering a script. This course is designed to provide you with a plethora of tools, strategies, and methods for reading and analyzing plays in a way to help blossom your creative expression while also keeping the theatrical goals of the production in mind. We will read classical as well as contemporary plays in order to provide you with hands-on experience at performing focused, mindful readings and utilizing script analysis techniques, which will allow you to further your growth as a theatre artist. Understanding the creative choices available from rigorous script analysis is the foundation of all theatrical performance. Ours will be a methodical approach.

II. Course Objectives:

- The student will be able to analyze a script in ways that are necessary to a theatre practitioner or teacher.
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of different theatrical styles.
- The student will be able to form and articulate a critical analysis and evaluation of a work of theatre.
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of the component areas of theatrical creation, process, production, performance, and study, and their complex relationships.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- critically analyze, evaluate and describe a dramatic work and its underlying structural elements.
- read and analyze a play with an understanding of its various technical requirements (i.e., setting, costumes, lighting, acting style, etc.).
- demonstrate a richer basic knowledge of classical and contemporary plays and be able to place a theatrical work in its historical context.

- Attendance of all Mainstage and studio productions is required

III. Materials

- **Required plays:**

1. *The Glass Menagerie*: Chapter 1
2. *Fool for Love*: Chapters 1 & 2
3. *Somewhere In Between*: Chapters 1, 2, 3
4. *Glengarry Glen Ross*: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
5. *Uncanny Valley*: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
6. *Macbeth*: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

It is your responsibility to have completed the required readings by the due date.

IV. Class Procedures and Policies

Attendance Policy: A career in the fine arts demands devotion and discipline; preparation for this career requires meticulous development of dedicated work habits. Regular and punctual attendance is demanded for all classes.

- It is University policy to excuse students from class attendance for certain reasons related to health, family emergencies, and other situations of similar importance. Excused absences from theatre classes will only be granted upon presentation of written documentation from the teacher, sponsor or physician involved upon the first day of the student's return. In the case of absences caused by university-sponsored events, inclusion in the university's public listing of such absences will constitute an official excuse. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor that he/she has scheduled the planned official absence.
- A total of 4 or unexcused absences will automatically result in the student receiving a failing grade.
- In the case of missed classes, the student will be held responsible for the successful completion of assigned work and/or projects.

V. Requirements

This is a university course, taken mostly by prospective majors. It involves a good deal of reading. Part of the expectation of this course is that your writing level be appropriate to a university-level course in the humanities. If you are not confident regarding your writing ability, make arrangements now to take advantage of the university's various writing assistance programs.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Play thoughts:** each student will turn in a one page reaction paper on each assigned play. The purpose of the paper is to begin opening up your thinking about the play and to help you to commit something to paper concerning your point-of-view on the work. The papers are due the first day we discuss a play. **TYPED**
5 points each x 6 plays = 30 points
2. **Quizzes:** There will be 6 quizzes during the semester. They will be short, lasting approximately 15 minutes each. Quizzes will cover terms learned in the class as well as the individual plays.
30 points total:
3. **Production Commentary:** You are required to see the Mainstage production and any other student productions. A two-page commentary on the production is due at the class period immediately after each production closes. This is not a performance review, but rather a commentary on the means by which underlying and critical analyses are revealed in the theatrical production. **TYPED**
10 points x 2 commentaries = 20 points

4. Final Project Proposal/ Presentations

Students will present a play of their choice (must be a full-length play) that they are pitching to be produced. The proposal is a “mock” presentation to the board of a non-profit theater. Each person will write a 1-page proposal and give in a 5/7-minute presentation. 20 points.

Participation / Effort: You are expected to come to class prepared and to be fully engaged during class discussions.

VI. Grading Policies

Grading Scale:

Final Grades are assigned as follows:

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:

90-100 =A

89-80 =B

79-70 =C

69-60 =D

59 & Lower =F

Acceptable Student Behavior: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom.

VII. Diversity

This class engages material covering a diverse range of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, and disability. While I encourage you to formulate and express your thoughts and opinions throughout the semester, discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated.

University Specific Policies and Procedures:

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have

been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

X. Course Calendar (Subject to Change)

August 26:
Introduction to class

August 28: PREFACE
The why and what of Play Analysis

August 30: KEY TERMS

September 2: NO CLASS

September 4: *The Glass Menagerie*/Specific Questions for the first reading

September 6: *The Glass Menagerie*/Stage Directions

September 9: *The Glass Menagerie*/Information from dialogue

September 11: Structural concept of Comedy & Drama

September 13: QUIZ, READ *FOOL FOR LOVE*

September 16: *Fool for Love*/first read

September 18: Given Circumstances, Questions

September 20: Backstory

September 23: *Fool for Love* continued, language use

September 25: QUIZ

September 27: NO CLASS (TETA Conference) Read *Somewhere in Between*

September 30: *Somewhere in Between* first read

October 2: Given circumstances

October 4: Theatrical contract questions

October 7: Contract vs. conventions

October 9: Rep & Pre

October 11: *Quiz Somewhere in Between*

READ *Glengarry Glen Ross*

October 14: *Glengarry Glen Ross* First read,

October 16: Given circumstances, theatre contract

October 18: NO CLASS

October 21: NO CLASS

October 23: Character questions

October 25: Character continued

October 28: Complex characters, situational, video clip

READ *UNCANNY VALLEY*

October 30: Conflict/ Protagonist, antagonist.

November 1: Structure of conflict/process

November 4: Major dramatic question,

November 6: Introductory incident, moment of engagement, opposing forces

November 8: Testing proposed climax & MDQ

November 11: No class

November 13: QUIZ

November 15: Synthesis/Conflict versus theme

November 18: Examples, Antigone, Tartuffe, **Final project play selection deadline**

November 20: Conflict analysis applied to a scene/Macbeth

November 22: Continued

November 25: **OPEN DAY**

November 27: **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

November 29: **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

December 2: **Review**

December 4: **Review**

December 6: **LAST DAY OF CLASS**

FINAL: DECEMBER 11TH 8am



Class schedule, assignments, due dates are subject to change.

This course is an agreement between students and faculty and may be changed by the professor as needed. You are responsible for any announcements made in class or otherwise.