

THR 110 – THEATRICAL PLAY ANALYSIS

COURSE SYLLABUS

SAMPLE

M W 3:00 – 4:20

CLASSES HELD IN: RM. 218 AUD

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& by appointment

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

Play study in relation to theatrical production.

This course analyzes play scripts with an eye towards the ways in which structure contributes to live performance. We begin with the premise that the script is a score for live performance. We will examine a number of critical approaches to dramatic structure—such as Aristotle's *Poetics*, the Freytag method, and the Backwards and Forwards method as a means of getting a deeper understanding of a plays meaning, action, and characters. We will also examine the use of genre, theme, metaphor, symbolism, etc. in dramatic literature, as well as explore the importance of dramaturgical research in understanding the world of the play.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By completing the reading and exercises in this course, students should be able:

- To identify and analyze the components of classical tragedy according to Aristotle's *Poetics*
- To understand the components of Freytag's dramatic structure and apply it to a variety of plays
- To analyze performance scripts according to Ball's Backwards and Forwards method
- To view play scripts not only as literature but as blueprints for performance with regard to premise
- To conduct introductory-level dramaturgical research

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Ball, David, Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays
- Worthen, W.B., The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama, 6th Edition

SUGGESTED TEXTS:

- Gibaldi, Joseph, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Fifth Edition

REQUIRED PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE:

- *U.P.* (Feb. 5-10)
 - The RCAH Auditorium
- *The Lady Victory* (Feb. 21-24 & 26-27)
 - The Arena Theatre
- *Sweet Mercy* (March 19-24)
 - The Arena Theatre
- *Funny Girl* (April 19-21 and 23-28)
 - The Pasant Theatre

NOTE: *Students Tickets are \$10.00:* Tickets are available from the Wharton Center Box Office or 1.800.WHARTON or www.whartoncenter.com

Ushering Info:

Ushers are needed for all **Department of Theatre** performances. You can sign up for ushering by visiting the MSU Theatre website (www.theatre.msu.edu/usher/). Fill out the appropriate form and return to the Department of Theatre office (113C Auditorium). This is a good way to see the show for **FREE**, but availability is limited.

If you sign up – you must show up!

Departmental Class/Rehearsal/Performance Policy:

Our primary focus is your education. Classes should take precedence over production. To ensure that this focus remain balanced we have instituted a “no class attendance means no rehearsal policy” for all BFA and MFA actors and Stage Managers.

Every course has different attendance guidelines. This policy is related to the number of allowed absences in any THR or DAN class. If you exceed the number of allowed absences for any individual class, the Director of the production that you are involved with will be notified regarding the break of policy and you will not be permitted to participate in that evening’s rehearsal or performance. Please check the attendance policy carefully on all THR and DAN syllabi.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment	Assignment
1	1/7	Introduction; Discussion of Syllabus & Course Expectations	Re-Read Syllabus; Read <i>Trifles</i> then <i>A Jury of Her Peers</i>	
	1/9	<i>Trifles & Jury of Her Peers</i> Quiz & Discussion; Freytag’s Pyramid	Read <i>Poetics</i>	
2	1/14	<i>Poetics</i> Quiz & Discussion	Read <i>Oedipus</i>	<i>Oedipus</i> DSW Due on ANGEL: 1/16 by 3:00pm
	1/16	<i>Oedipus</i> Quiz; <i>Oedipus</i> Discussion	Watch a movie version of Hamlet: Search “Theatre in Video” at MSU, login and watch a Kevin Kline version for FREE!	
3	1/21	MLK DAY	MLK DAY	MLK DAY
	1/23	<i>Oedipus</i> Dramaturgy Presentation; Discussion of Dramaturgy Project Expectations; Discuss <i>Hamlet</i>	Read B&F : Part One	
4	1/28	B&F Part One Quiz & Discussion	Read B&F : Part Two & Three	
	1/30	B&F Two & Three Quiz & Discussion	Read <i>A Doll’s House</i>	<i>A Doll’s House</i> Journal Due on ANGEL: 2/4 by 3:00pm
5	2/4	<i>A Doll’s House</i> Quiz & Discussion		Go See: U.P.
	2/6	Dramaturgy Presentation; Discussion of <i>A Doll’s House</i> : Directing/Well-Made Play	Read <i>Machinal</i>	<i>Machinal</i> DSW Due on ANGEL: 2/11 by 3:00pm
6	2/11	<i>Machinal</i> Quiz & Discussion		###U.P. Perf. Report Due on ANGEL: 2/11 by Midnight
	2/13	Dramaturgy Presentation; Discussion of <i>Machinal</i> : Isms	Read <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>	<i>The Cherry Orchard</i> Journal Due on ANGEL: 2/18 by 3:00pm
7	2/18	<i>The Cherry Orchard</i> Quiz & Discussion		
	2/20	Dramaturgy Presentation; Discussion of <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> Design	Read <i>Cloud Nine</i>	<i>Cloud Nine</i> DSW Due on ANGEL: 2/25 by 3:00pm; Go See: The Lady Victory
8	2/25	<i>Cloud Nine</i> Quiz & Discussion		
	2/27	Dramaturgy Presentation; Discussion of <i>Cloud Nine</i> : Acting		###The Lady Victory Perf. Report Due on ANGEL: 2/28 by Midnight
SB	3/4-3/8	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
9	3/11	Prep for Midterm; Discussion of Publicity Poster Project	Prep for Midterm	
	3/13	MIDTERM	Read <i>Endgame</i>	<i>Endgame</i> Journal Due on ANGEL: 3/18 by 3:00pm
10	3/18	<i>Endgame</i> Quiz & Discussion		Go See: Sweet Mercy
	3/20	Dramaturgy Presentation; Discussion of <i>Endgame</i> : Movement	Read <i>Tartuffe</i>	<i>Tartuffe</i> DSW Due on ANGEL: 3/25 by 3:00pm

11	3/25	KIRK IN HOUSTON: Dr. Daniel Smith (Guest) <i>Tartuffe</i> Quiz & Discussion		###Sweet Mercy Perf. Report Due on ANGEL: 3/25 by Midnight
	3/27	KIRK IN HOUSTON: Dr. Daniel Smith (Guest) Dramaturgy Presentation; Discussion of <i>Tartuffe</i> , Verse	Read <i>Death of a Salesman</i>	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> DSW and Online Posting Due on ANGEL: 4/1 by 3:00pm
12	4/1	<i>KIRK IN HOUSTON</i> <i>Death of a Salesman</i> ONLINE PRESENTATION		
	4/3	Dramaturgy Presentation; Discussion of <i>Death of a Salesman: Realism</i>		
13	4/8	Musical Theatre Conventions		
	4/10	Publicity Poster Project Presentations	Read <i>Dutchman</i>	<i>Dutchman</i> Online Posting Due on ANGEL: 4/15 by 3:00pm
14	4/15	<i>Dutchman</i> Discussion; Theme Centric	Read <i>Andre's Mother</i>	<i>Andre's Mother</i> Online Posting Due on ANGEL: 4/17 by 3:00pm
	4/17	<i>Andre's Mother</i> Discussion; Symbol Centric	Read <i>The America Play</i>	<i>The America Play</i> Journal Due on ANGEL: 4/22 by 3:00pm Go See: <i>Funny Girl</i>
15	4/22	<i>The America Play</i> Quiz & Discussion		
	4/24	Discussion of <i>The America Play: Current Theatrical Trends; Course Evaluations</i>	Study for Final Exam	Study for Final Exam

EXAM: Wednesday, May 1: 3:00-5:00pm

COURSE EVALUATION:

Procedures for Accomplishing Objective:

1. Thoughtful and creative completion of class assignments.
2. Applied understanding of the terms and theory covered in readings and presentations. This is accomplished through discussions, quizzes, journals, postings and related assignments.

Requirements of Students:

1. Active participation.
2. **NO** late worksheets, quizzes, journals, postings or presentations will be permitted. **NO** make-up dates will be permitted due to the process oriented nature of the course.
3. Successful completion of assignments.
4. Respect, support, and encouragement of classmates through participation in discussion.

You, the student, will be held accountable for keeping up with class assignments and projects.

BREAKDOWN OF FINAL GRADE:

- Each assignment grade is evaluated on three criteria: “application of course materials”, “quality of work”, and “completion of work.”
- Academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of 0.0.
 - **PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**
If you use someone else’s ideas as your own (for instance, copying a sentence from the internet into one of your papers without properly citing the author), an F for the assignment is automatic. Depending on the gravity of the offense, plagiarism may result in an F for the semester, and even a letter to the dean about your academic dishonesty. To understand expectations for academic integrity: <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/index.html>

POINT BREAKDOWN OF FINAL GRADE:

12 Quizzes – 120 Points

4 Journal Responses – 80 Points

- These responses are to include a three-sentence description of the essential action of the play followed by 1-2 paragraphs of personal response. These are to be submitted on ANGEL, but you must have your 3 sentences in class with you on the first day we discuss the play.

5 Dramatic Structure Worksheets – 100 Points

- Information posted on ANGEL.

3 Online Postings – 60 Points

- Information posted on ANGEL.

2 Performance Reports – 120 Points

- Two performance analyses are **required** for all students in THR 110 by attending live performances of the MSU Department of Theatre during the semester. ###Students will pre-choose their shows. Choices include: *U.P.*, *The Lady Victory*, or *Sweet Mercy*.
- Performance analyses are due on the dates listed above following the closing of the show.
- Write a **two-page minimum** review/report/commentary on each performance, relating your comments to a course topic provided in class. Papers are to follow MLA standards being typed, double spaced, 1" margins, correct grammar and punctuation, etc.

Dramaturgy Assignment – 80 Points

Publicity Poster Project – 80 Points

- Design a poster incorporating an image and a short quote that encapsulates the chosen musical. The image should give the viewer a sense of the type of production that will be presented.

Midterm Exam – 160 Points

- Based on the first ½ half of the course.

Final Exam – 200 Points

- Based on the second ½ half of the course.

GRADING SCALE:

- 925-100 = 4.0
- 875-924 = 3.5
- 825-874 = 3.0
- 775-824 = 2.5
- 725-774 = 2.0
- 675-724 = 1.5
- 600-674 = 1.0
- 000-599 = 0.0

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

- Attendance is **Mandatory**. Being present and receptive to the information, discussions, and critique sessions presented in class sessions is essential to the successful completion of the course. More than three (3) absences (excused or unexcused) will result in the lowering of your semester's grade by .25 of a grade point. *Each additional unexcused absence beyond three will lower your semester grade by .25 of a grade point.* Attendance will be maintained on ANGEL. Note: MSU sanctioned or VISA sanctioned absences must be submitted with appropriate documentation (Olin doctor notes do NOT count as excused absences).
- Late arrivals will be noted and every three (3) late markings will equal one absence.
- Attendance will be taken at each session.
- Please be courteous to your instructor and fellow students by arriving on time.

UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

1. **Academic Honesty:** Article 2.3.3 of the [Academic Freedom Report](#) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, **The Department of Theatre** adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, *Protection of Scholarship and Grades*; the all-University Policy on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See [Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide](#) and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.)

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in **THR 110 – Theatrical Play Analysis**. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/dishonestyFAQ.html>)

2. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** (from the *Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)*): Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation ("RISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.
3. **Drops and Adds:** The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is **2/1/13**. The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is **2/27/13**. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.
4. **Commercialized Lecture Notes:** Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.**
5. **Attendance:** Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.
6. **Internet:** Some professional journals will not consider a submission for publication if the article has appeared on the Internet. Please notify your instructor in writing if you do not want your course papers posted to the course Web site.
7. **Disruptive Behavior:** Article 2.3.5 of the [Academic Freedom Report](#) (AFR) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.3.10 of the [AFR](#) states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." [General Student Regulation 5.02](#) states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Faculty Judiciary process.

**Note: The Code of Teaching Responsibility requires instructors who permit students to commercialize their class lecture notes to include a statement in their course syllabi that gives such permission. Absent such permission, students may not do so.

Integrity of Scholarship and Grades

This policy is located in the Academic Programs catalog at

<https://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=112#s534>