

Course: THEA 162/SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Credits: 3

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey Stephens

Meetings: MWF 8-8:50am in CAC 239

Term: SPRING 2017

Office: NFAC 211

Phone: 346-4706/email: jstephen@uwsp.edu

Office Hours: M & W 9:30-11:30; R 2:00-4:00; other times by appt.

Required Texts:

Caputi, Anthony, ed. *Eight Modern Plays*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1996. (Purchase)

Pritner, Carl and Scott E. Walters. *Introduction to Play Analysis*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005 (or 2015 reissue).
(Rental)

PLEASE NOTE: You must purchase/rent the books above.

Texts Provided by Instructor:

Aristotle's *Poetics* (online—see below)

Ibsen's *Ghosts* (online—see below)

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Dover edition from the *Cambridge Shakespeare*)

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (Dover edition from the George Young translation)

Text on E-Reserve:

Vogel, Paula. *How I Learned to Drive*

DO NOT COME TO CLASS WITHOUT THE TEXTBOOK(S) UNDER DISCUSSION. *You will be marked absent if I ask you to read from the text and you do not have your own copy.* Such absences will impact your final grade.

Course Description:

The course in script analysis exposes you to analytical and interpretive techniques used to study play scripts in order to better produce them *on the stage*. Understanding dramatic theory and theatrical criticism is also an important component of the course. THEA 162 is concerned with 1) the way in which plays may be made theatrically viable in performance; 2) the examination of dramatic form and theatrical style; and 3) the expansion of your understanding of the capacity of dramatic structure to impact performance.

There is no “one” way to analyze a script; indeed, the analysis of literature is mostly a subjective pursuit. This course offers no easy answers and does not rank one analytical method above another. Instead, the course provides a survey of various techniques, each focusing on certain systems characteristic of a given approach. For example, a “traditional” analytical approach to dramatic literature would enter a text from the point of view of plot, character, given circumstances, and setting. On the other hand, a Marxist analysis will focus on class conflict not only in the play itself, but also in the historical era when the play was written. A feminist analysis might see the play as a document that reveals the extent to which the patriarchy impacts the development of character in a text. (DO NOT WORRY IF THESE TERMS ARE UNFAMILIAR TO YOU—we are here to try and make sense of them.)

No matter the approach, *we are most concerned with making plays exciting and engaging on stage*. We are not concerned with analysis for the sake of analysis. In this sense, then, script analysis is a *productive* course—it should help you to direct sensitively, to perform courageously, to design boldly.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- 1) **define** the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic methods of play analysis;
- 2) **define** the following descriptive terms: Aristotelian, Shakespearean, Ibsenism, Chekhovian, Realism, Expressionism, Absurdism, Modernism, Postmodernism;
- 3) **write a “concept” analysis** of a given dramatic text using an objective, not subjective, style;
- 4) **read** a play to understand why it has “literary merit,” while being able to **articulate** why the text is merely a foundation for live theatre production;
- 5) **identify** major past and present dramatic and theatrical conventions as they reflect dominant trends in dramatic writing from classical antiquity to the present time.

GEP PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The General Education Program (GEP) seeks to develop these qualities of global citizenship in four distinct ways. After completing the general education curriculum, students will:

- Demonstrate critical thinking, quantitative, and communication skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global society.
- Demonstrate broad knowledge of the physical, social, and cultural worlds as well as the methods by which this knowledge is produced.
- Recognize that responsible global citizenship involves personal accountability, social equity, and environmental sustainability.
- Apply their knowledge and skills, working in interdisciplinary ways to solve problems.

Style of Teaching:

Lecture, discussion, presentation (including students reading aloud from the texts).

Assignments & Exams:

- Short in-class analyses of two of the plays (including revision) assigned each worth 20 points for a total of 40 points.
- One 20-point oral presentation on an assigned play during which you will discuss general impressions of the script, its tone, point-of-view, possible staging options, stage-worthiness, box office potential, etc. or historical context of the play. **You must use specific examples from your assigned play to support your position.** Details provided in a hard copy handout during the second week of class. I will assign the plays/topics for which you are responsible.
- One 20-point essay on assigned readings from Aristotle's *Poetics*.
- You will earn or lose ten (20) points during the term based on my perception on your participation.
- Four exams (including final) at 100 points each for a total of 400 points. Exams consist of identification of quotations from plays, of set design as described in stage directions, of names of characters, and of analytical methods. Format is short answer, multiple choice, T/F, fill-in-the-blank. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RE: NAMES, DATES, WHO DID WHAT TO WHOM IN WHICH PLAY are standard. Each exam contains one section (usually 25-40%) of multiple choice questions about the plots of the plays read for that exam.
- **CHECK YOUR EMAIL DAILY FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THIS CLASS.**

Grading: There are 500 points possible. Grading Scale: 450-500 = A; 400-449 = B; 350-399 = C; 300-349 = D; 0-259 = F. UWSP uses + (plus) and - (minus) marks; therefore, within each 50-point range, final letter grades will include a "+" marking for the top third, no marking for the middle third, and a - (minus) marking for the bottom third. Example: 375 points total = C; 400 points total = B-; 440 points total = B+. Grades of A+ and F+ do not exist; therefore, if you receive 479 points, for example, you will receive an "A" for the course, not an "A+".

Attendance Policy:

It is your responsibility to attend class. You may miss three class sessions with no penalty. The following scale applies: 1-3 absences, no penalty; 4 or more absences, course grade dropped one full letter after your point total has been established; therefore, if you earn a total of 425 points after all grades have been tabulated, and if you have 4 or more absences, the "B" your point total indicates will be dropped to a "C".

Plagiarism: In this course, "plagiarism" is defined as using undocumented source material as your own thought (i.e., not giving credit to a source) as well as any form of "cheating." If I suspect plagiarism, you will receive zero points for that assignment and be referred to your advisor and/or academic dean to begin the review process. This is the first step toward disciplinary action that may (and should) result in expulsion from the university.

Disability & Assistive Technology Services: Pursuant to the UW System policy, each UW institution maintains an Office of Disability Services (located on the sixth floor of the library Ph. 346-3365) as a resource for students, faculty, and staff. Students may document a disability and request auxiliary aids from this office.

Course Schedule (*subject to change*):

DATE	TOPIC	DUE
M Jan. 23	Introduction/What is dramatic "structure"? What is theatrical "style"?	Pritner 58-63
W Jan. 25	Continued	

POSTMODERN

- F Jan. 27 The State of Contemporary Playwrighting *How I Learned to Drive*; Pritner 1-17; 74-79
- M Jan. 30 Continued

ARISTOTELIAN

- W Feb. 1 Continued + Aristotle
READ: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.html> Section 1, Parts IV-V
- F Feb. 3 Continued Section 1, Parts VI-VIII
- M Feb. 6 Continued Section 1, Parts IX-X
- W Feb. 8 **FIRST EXAM**
- F Feb. 10 Greek Tragedy/Climactic Structure + FREYTAG *Oedipus* (pgs. 1-26)
- M Feb. 13 Continued *Oedipus* (pgs. 26-36)
- W Feb. 15 **Aristotelian Analysis in Class**
- F Feb. 17 READING DAY and retrieve graded Aristotelian Analysis from my office

SHAKESPEAREAN

- M Feb. 20 Reading Shakespeare *Hamlet* Act I
- W Feb. 22 Shakespearean Tragedy Pritner 58-63
- F Feb. 24 Continued *Hamlet* Acts II & III
- M Feb. 27 Continued *Hamlet* Act IV & V
- W Mar. 1 Continued
- F Mar. 3 Film in class TBA

M Mar. 6 **SECOND EXAM**

REALISM

- W Mar. 8 Well-Made Play *Ghosts* act I (online); Pritner 21-27
Ibsen's *Ghosts*: "The Most Scandalous Play of the Century"
<http://www.marxists.org/subject/women/fiction/ibsen/ghosts/>
- F Mar. 10 Well-Made Play continued *Ghosts* acts II, III

IBSENISM

- M Mar. 13 Ibsenism *The Wild Duck* acts I, II; Pritner 45-51
- W Mar. 15 Continued
- F Mar. 17 TBA
- M Mar. 20 SPRING BREAK
- W Mar. 22 SPRING BREAK
- F Mar. 24 SPRING BREAK

- M Mar. 27 Ibsenism *The Wild Duck* acts III, IV, V
- W Mar. 29 Continued
- F Mar. 31 **THIRD EXAM**

CHEKHOVIAN

- M Apr. 3 Modern Dramaturgy *The Three Sisters* acts I, II
- W Apr. 5 Continued *The Three Sisters* acts III, IV
- F Apr. 7 Film in class

- M Apr. 10 Continued

- W Apr. 12 Continued

MID-CENTURY AMERICAN/DOMESTIC/KITCHEN SINK

- F Apr. 14 Miller, Williams, Hellman, Hansberry, O'Neill, Albee *The Glass Menagerie* (on reserve)

M Apr. 17 Continued
W Apr. 19 Continued
F Apr. 21 **FOURTH EXAM**

M Apr. 24
W Apr. 26
F Apr. 28

M May 1
W May 3
F May 5

M May 8
W May 10
F May 12

EXPRESSIONISM

T, Apr. 1 Eugene O'Neill
R, Apr. 3 **NO CLASS (Online assignment)**

The Hairy Ape
Alternatives to Realism
(E-reserve)

MID-CENTURY MODERNISM

T, Apr. 8 Continued + Miller & Williams
R, Apr. 10 Continued: Broadway Plays

Pritner 34-40 & 42

T, Apr. 15 Domestic/Kitchen Sink Drama

Cat on A Hot Tin Roof
+ Pritner 45-53 & 57

R, Apr. 17 Continued

T, Apr. 22 Continued
R, Apr. 24 **THIRD EXAM**

ABSURDISM

T, Apr. 29 Avant-Garde Sam Shepard
R, May 1 Continued + "Trends" in Contemporary Drama:
The "Postdramatic"

Buried Child

T, May 6 **REVIEW**
R, May 8 Study on Own

FINAL EXAM:

Thursday, May 18 10:15-12:15

**All students MUST take the final exam when it is scheduled.
The final exam is comprehensive.**