

# **THEA 1440.001: Play Analysis**

Fall 2017

Room: ENV 115

Time: TR 9:30 – 10:50 AM

Professor: Julie Brinker

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Office: RTFP 222

Office Hours: M/W 9:00AM-10:45AM

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this class, we will ask such questions as: What is theatre? How do we analyze a play? What is the purpose of the plot structure, characterization, language, and stage directions, and how do these elements vary from play to play? We will consider genre classifications and discuss the nature of tragedy and comedy.

We begin with the premise that the script is a score for live performance. The purpose of our analysis as theatre professionals -- actors, directors, designers, playwrights, producers, and scholars -- is to be able to read scripts so that we are able to present them to audiences. We seek to discover what the playwright has dramatized and how we can best realize his or her work on stage clearly, powerfully and imaginatively.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- *Norton Anthology of Drama, Vols. 1 and 2 or Shorter Edition*
- *Many of the assigned plays can also be found online or in other anthologies or individual scripts.*
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## **ON RESERVE in Willis Library (First Floor, Library Services)**

- Aristotle's *Poetics* (in the bookstore and on reserve in Willis Library): PN1040.A5 B7 1961 c.2
- Online: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.html>

## **Disclaimer/Trigger Warning:**

Theatre is a reflection of life, and often contains situations, language, or actions that some may find unsavory or objectionable. Please contact the instructor for alternative assignments if you feel that you need them. Confidentiality will be assured.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1**

Tue, Aug. 29 Lecture: Syllabus; Class Introduction

Thu, Aug. 31 Lecture: **Play Analysis Introduction:** What is drama? What is theatre? Why do we analyze plays? How do we read plays? **Receive group assignments:** What is a Dramaturg?

### **Week 2**

Tue, Sept. 5 Lecture: Terms Lecture  
Assignment: Terms Assignment

Thu, Sept. 7 **Due: Terms assignment**  
Assignment: Read *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles – complete  
*Oedipus Rex* Assignment

### **Week 3**

Tue, Sept. 12 **Due: Oedipus Rex assignment due**  
Lecture: *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles—Impelling Agent/Analytic Demonstration  
Assignment: Read *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes

Th, Sept. 14 **Quiz 1 – Terms and Oedipus Rex**  
Lecture: Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*  
Assignment: Read *Everyman* by Anonymous

### **Week 4**

Tue, Sept. 19 **Quiz 2 – Lysistrata**  
**Due: Lysistrata GROUP PRESENTATION**  
Lecture: *Everyman* discussion

Thu, Sept. 21 Lecture: Finish discussion on *Everyman*

### **Week 5**

Tue, Sept. 26 **Quiz 3 – Everyman**  
**Due: Everyman GROUP PRESENTATION**  
Assignment: Read *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

Thu, Sept. 28 Lecture: Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

### **Week 6**

Tue, Oct. 3 **Quiz 4 – Hamlet**  
**Due: Hamlet GROUP PRESENTATION**  
Assignment: Read *Tartuffe* by Moliere

Thu, Oct. 5     Lecture: *Tartuffe*

**Week 7**

Tue, Oct. 10     **Quiz 5 – *Tartuffe***  
**Due: GROUP PRESENTATION**  
**Assignment:** Read *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde.

Thu, Oct. 12     Lecture: *Earnest* discussion

**Go see *Fabulation* this weekend!!! You must write a REQUIRED review.  
Due Nov. 2.**

***Fabulation***  
**by Lynn Nottage**  
**Directed by**  
**Vickie Washington**  
**Oct. 12, 13, 14 @ 7:30 pm**  
**Oct. 14 & 15 @ 2:00 pm**  
**RTVF Building--Studio Theatre**

**Week 8**

Tue, Oct. 17     **Quiz 6 – *Earnest***  
**Due: *Earnest* GROUP PRESENTATION.**  
Catch-up and review for Midterm Exam  
**Assignment:** Study for midterm!!

Thu, Oct. 19     **MIDTERM EXAM**  
**Assignment:** Read *Machinal* by Sophie Treadwell.

**Week 9**

Tue, Oct. 24     Lecture: *Machinal* discussion

Thu, Oct. 26     **Quiz 7 – *Machinal***  
**Due: *Machinal* GROUP PRESENTATION**  
**Assignment:** Read *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller

**Week 10**

Tue, Oct. 31     Lecture: *Death of a Salesman* discussion

Thu, Nov. 2     **Quiz 8– *Death of a Salesman***  
**Due: *Death of a Salesman* GROUP PRESENTATION**  
**Due: REVIEW of *Fabulation***  
**Assignment:** Read *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett

### Week 11

Tue, Nov. 7     Lecture: *Godot* discussion

Thu, Nov. 9     **Quiz 9– *Waiting for Godot***

**Due: *Godot* GROUP PRESENTATION**

**Assignment:** Read *Fences* by August Wilson.

\* Go see Miller's *The Crucible* and write a review for extra credit!! Must be turned in by Dec. 7.

***The Crucible* by Arthur Miller**  
**Directed by Dr. Andrew B. Harris**  
**Nov. 9, 10, 11@ 7:30 pm**  
**Nov. 11 & 12 @ 2:00 pm**  
**RTVF in the University Theatre**

### Week 12

Tue, Nov. 14     Lecture: *Fences* discussion

Thu, Nov. 16     **Quiz 10– *Fences*.**

**Due: *Fences* GROUP PRESENTATION**

**Assignment:** Read *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage

### Week 13

Tue, Nov. 21     Catch-up Day

Thu, Nov. 23     Thanksgiving: No Class

### Week 14

Tue, Nov. 28     Lecture: *Ruined*

Thu, Nov. 30     **Quiz 11 – *Ruined***

**Due: *Ruined* Group Presentation**

### Week 15

Tue, Dec. 5     Catch up and Review Day.

**Assignment:** Read handout for final exam.

Thu, Dec. 7     Catch up

**Assignment: STUDY!!!!**

### Week 16

**Dec 14            FINAL EXAM 8:00 am – 10:00 am**

## **GRADING**

Quiz average - **100** points (the lowest quiz grade will be dropped)

6 analytic exercises - **300** points (Each exercise is worth 50 points)

Group Project - **200** points

In-class participation/Homework Assignments – **100** points

Theatre Review (*Fabulation*) - **100** points

Midterm Exam -**100** points

Final Exam – **100** points

\_\_\_\_TOTAL: **1000** points\_\_\_\_

900-1000 points: A

800-899 points: B

700-799 points: C

699 points or Below: F

Students entering the Theatre program under the current Catalog and any following catalogs are required to earn a grade of “**B**” or better for department credit. If the student does not receive at least a “B” in this class, they will be required to retake the course the next semester it is offered.

## **QUIZZES**

A quiz will be given about once a week over the chapter and/or play just covered. If you miss a quiz before the midterm, you have until the day of the midterm to make it up, and with quizzes after the midterm, you have until the final to make them up, **no exceptions!**

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

Extra credit will be given to those who wish to write reviews on performances, lectures, etc. on/off the UNT campus that pertain to theatre. Reviews need to be two to three pages. Please keep to the format of Times New Roman font in 12 point type. 10 points will be added to the lowest quiz grade for each review written. There is no limit. These extra credit reviews must still fit the criteria for the required theatre reviews in order to receive full credit (*See Theatre Review Rubric*).

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Class discussion is important. You are required to read all the plays, **including the introductions** to the plays in the *Norton Drama* texts, come to class with the text, ready to participate in all class components.

## **REVIEWS**

**You will be required to attend and review UNT’s production of *Fabulation* this semester.** The other options for extra credit reviews at UNT are *The Crucible* and any others listed on the department website, or a production outside UNT.

**ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED IN THIS COURSE.** You are expected to attend each class for *the entire* period. You have the syllabus and will be expected to keep up even if you miss a class.

Roll is passed around at the beginning of the class. If you are not present to sign the roll, or do not sign it at all, you are considered absent. **Do not for any reason sign for another student in the class if they are not present.** If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to inform me at the end of the class. Leaving class early will result in an absence.

The university policy states that any instructor who informs students in writing about the necessity of class attendance may request that the Registrar drop a student from the course with a grade of WF or F upon the accumulation of the stated absences. Should the student choose to drop the course, he or she must initiate the drop and acquire all necessary signatures and paperwork to ensure he or she is officially dropped. **A student who reaches 5 absences by the twelfth class day will be dropped from the course for nonattendance.**

**Cell phones must be off during class.** Violators may be asked to leave, and will lose credit for attendance.....or will face certain embarrassment!

**Policy on grades of “Incomplete”:** A grade of “Incomplete” for the course will be given only if

- a) the student is passing the course; *and*
- b) the only missing work is the last paper; *and*
- c) the reason it is missing is extended illness or extended family emergency; *and*
- d) the student requests the incomplete in writing.

**\*\*\*\*Important: The incomplete must be made up within the next two long semesters. \*\*\*\***

**If you need help, please talk to me or the grader!** Please inform me of any difficulties you may be having. I will be available during office hours and, if necessary, will make special arrangements.

**CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE** can be found in the 2017-2018 Undergraduate Catalog. Students should be aware that “acts of dishonesty” include cheating, plagiarism, furnishing misleading information, forgery, as well as theft. The penalties for perpetrators as well as accessories (which includes advising, instigating, or encouraging) are extremely severe and we will uphold the policies and regulations of the University.

### **PLAGIARISM**

The purpose of the course is to teach you how to analyze a play so that you will be able to work, communicate, and produce in the theatre. We always encourage library research, but we want to hear from you. Our purpose is to develop interpretive skills rather than to gather facts (or the conclusions of others). Any information you transmit from another source, such as a previous course or your own reading, must be footnoted. All the work you do in this course must be entirely your own, with the exception of occasional footnoted sources. Plagiarism or

collaboration with another student in any of your assignments (except the Group Project) will result in no credit for the assignment. There is no way to make up such an assignment.

### **COURSE-RELATED ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

*\*\*This syllabus is not a contract. The instructor may change requirements, change the class schedule and change the due dates as he deems appropriate. \*\**

## **ANALYTIC EXERCISES**

An electronic form template will be posted on Blackboard. This form must be filled in completely for each of the six plays.

No extensions are possible for these assignments because we will use them in class. **They must be brought to the beginning of the first class for which a given play is assigned.** To receive credit, you must turn in a hard copy. NO EMAILED FORMS! You must do 6 of these exercises out of a possible 10, beginning with *Everyman*.

If you hand in more than six, each extra form will replace a low analytical grade if it is the higher score. If it is lower than all of your six recorded analytical grades, it will be the one dropped. The more you do, the better you will get at doing them. Please don't put them off. If you decide you're going to do only the last plays, I can almost guarantee that circumstances will prevent you.

- You are required to complete **SIX** play analysis forms over the course of the semester.
- Late forms will be dropped a letter grade. After **one (1) week**, the form **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**.
- Handwritten forms will be dropped a letter grade.
- These forms are not group work – if we suspect that two people worked together, each will receive a zero with no chance for makeup. Also, if we find you have copied SparkNotes or a fellow student, you will receive a **ZERO** for the form.



## Outline for Theatre Review

**Information to appear at the top of your review.** The name of the play underlined or in *italics*. The playwright. The director. The designers. The date of the performance being reviewed. Names of leading actors referred to in your review and role played. (The name of the producer and/or the name of the theatre/producing group.) This review needs to be **3-4 pages in length!**

Note: A review is a **persuasive** document. If you feel the production is significant, you should try to tempt your reader to attend. If you feel the production is **not** worthwhile then the introduction should prepare the reader not to attend the production.

**Introductory Paragraph.** This paragraph sets the tone for your review. What about this production struck you? (**Choose ONE** from: The play itself, the production, the actors, the design, the style of the production, the musical settings, the occasion of seeing this play in a specific production venue, etc.) Ask yourself: "Is this an important play and, if so, why?" "Are there other plays by this writer (or other literary or artistic creations) that would be useful to your reader?" "Into what general category does this work fit: Is it a comedy or tragedy?" (Hint: You may want to inform the reader of what you expected prior to seeing the play or give some background about your theatergoing experience.)

**The Body of the Review.** Isolate what you feel was the *director's interpretation* of the play from what *the author's intention* was. For instance, almost all historical plays undergo some kind of a change from their initial productions. Discuss other well-known productions of this play or plays of this kind. You might use films, paintings, etc.

Once you have identified the point of the production, go over significant elements with regard to whether they support/detract from the production. (Significant elements might include: casting, acting, dialect, physicalization, cross gender casting, inter racial casting, placement of actors by director, design [set, sound, light costumes, music, etc.] )

Next, you should focus on one (at most three) key specific elements such as the *acting* or the *design* and discuss **how** these elements contributed to the production.

Be certain not only to praise or condemn **but backup your observations with supporting evidence.**

**Assessment.** *Identify what, if anything, did this production contribute to your understanding of theatre? What, if anything, can you say about the style of the production? Was it appropriate for the play, the occasion, the audience, etc.?*

**Conclusion.** Make a recommendation to your reader and support it by referring back to a point raised above in your review. (If you feel strongly positive about the production, advise the reader to go see it immediately. If you feel strongly negative, advise the reader not to go.)

**General Advice:** If a specific scene or speech makes a strong impression on you, by all means find an excuse to allude to it or quote the passage in your review. If something in the play makes you aware of a specific historical event or general truth, use it as key to unlock the rest of the play. Keep your writing style **simple, clear, and direct.**

### THEATRE REVIEW RUBRIC

	4	3	2	1
Identification	ID all cast and designers	ID most cast and designers	ID some cast and/or designers	Does not ID cast or designers
Thesis	Fully answers question of “importance and why?”	Suggests a reason for play’s importance and why	Gives an opinion with some evidence for play’s importance	Does not answer question of “importance and why?”
Interpretation	Fully explores the similarities and differences between author’s point of view and interpretive point of view	Explores a single interpretive viewpoint against author intention	Describes a single interpretive viewpoint (ie: has not read play but has seen the movie)	Does not make a distinction between author and interpreter
Significant Elements	Analyzes 3 or more significant elements	Discusses 2 or 3 significant elements	Lists 1 or 2 significant elements	Does not identify any significant elements
Assessment	Relates play to a broader cultural context or period	Relates play to other theatrical experiences	Relates play to movie version	States like/dislike
Conclusion	Makes a coherent recommendation based on their stated objectives and observations	Makes a qualified recommendation with some support	Makes a convoluted recommendation with little support	Does not make a supported recommendation
Sentences	Sentences are structured well, without run-ons or fragments; quotes are properly presented; sentences are punctuated correctly; words are well chosen	Good construction, with some run-ons or fragments; words are well chosen	Fair Construction, with some run-ons or fragments; words are not well chosen and some are misspelled	Poor Construction, with many grammatical errors; words are poorly selected and many are misspelled
Paper Format	Essay is at least three pages in 12 pt. font, double-spaced	Essay is two to three pages with larger font and spacing and some formatting errors	Essay is two pages with larger font and spacing with many formatting errors	Essay is one page or less