THEA 1440: Play Analysis

Interpret | Analyze | Critique

Spring 2026

Asynchronous

Instructor Contact

Name: Zoe Settle
Office Hours: Virtual via Zoom by appointment only
Email: zoe.settle@unt.edu

Course Description

Principles and techniques governing the preparation of plays and other theatrical events for performance, design, direction and production. Students will explore contemporary systems of script analysis with an emphasis on theory and criticism of theatre arts.

Course Structure

The class is delivered fully online. There will be no synchronous meetings required in order to pass this class. The course will contain 4 units, each of which will ask you to read a classic play, watch a production, then read a modern derivative. Included in each unit will be material to help contextualize the works you are reading, the playwrights themselves, and their place in American Theater. There will be weekly discussion posts to expand your thoughts on the work you're reading, with a reflective analysis due at the end of each unit. There will be a final project due on May 8th where you will synthesize what you've learned this semester.

Learning Outcomes

The ultimate objective of this course is to equip you with skills to critique and analyze theatrical works, while also beginning to curate your own personal taste. I have chosen a variety of plays from the theater canon, both old and new, and am hopeful this small sampling will encourage you to continue reading and exploring after the class has concluded.

Upon completion of this course, students should feel comfortable:

- Analyzing the social, historical, and cultural context of a play
- Exploring a play's themes and how they resonate with contemporary issues.
- Critiquing a performance's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the text.
- Articulating personal reactions to a play and its performance.
- Using critical thinking skills to evaluate the play's artistic merit and social impact.

Reading Materials:
- *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller - [Online PDF](#)
- *John Proctor is the Villain* by Kimberly Bellflower - [Online on CliffNotes](#)
- *Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry - [Online PDF](#)
- *Clybourne Park* by Bruce Norris - on Canvas
- *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen - [Online PDF](#)
- *A Doll's House Part II* by Lucas Hnath - on Canvas
- *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare - [Folger Online](#)
- *macbitches* by Sophie McIntosh* - [Purchase Here](#)

*Please note that you are only responsible for purchasing one of the plays this semester, and I recommend doing this as soon as possible in order to avoid shipping delays.

Productions:

The Crucible:
https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.libproxy.library.unt.edu/content/productions/the-crucible-digital-theatre?currentSeries=the-crucible-unit-of-study#about

A Raisin in the Sun:
https://youtu.be/cEmwWMgtwWA?si=OHZHJnj1FdAksYIG
Extended resources:
https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.libproxy.library.unt.edu/search?q=a+raisin+in+the+sun

A Doll's House:
https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.libproxy.library.unt.edu/content/productions/a-dolls-house-digital-theatre

Macbeth:
https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.libproxy.library.unt.edu/content/productions/macbeth-rsc#about

How to Succeed in this Course

Even though this class is fully online, your weekly engagement is necessary to be successful. This class requires critical thinking, weekly reading and writing, and interactions with your peers. Participating in an online course can be challenging, and I strongly urge you to keep an eye on deadlines for each module so that you can pace yourself accordingly.

While this is not an English or writing course, it is expected that your written responses will contain appropriate spelling and grammar. Please make a habit of double checking your work for legibility.

Play analysis is part of the process by which the written script is translated into living action on the stage. The focus is on *developing interpretive skills*, rather than to gather facts. I want to hear your own opinions and impressions of the play. Any information you transmit from another source, such as a previous course or your own reading, *must be cited*.

Communication: Communication is extremely important in an online class. If you are struggling, please email me as soon as you can so that I can help you. I am available to meet via zoom, and I want to work with you to be successful in this class.

I check my email at least twice a day and will make best efforts to reply within 24 hours on weekdays. Any communication sent after business hours on Friday may not receive a response until Monday.

Late assignments are only accepted in extremely rare circumstances. This includes issues with technology, so plan ahead.

ADA Accommodations
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (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, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) website (http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Please contact me at the start of the semester to discuss a plan for how I can help you best succeed in this course.

Student Obligation to Academic/Production Work

Dance & Theater students are expected to budget and organize their time and efforts in order to meet both their academic and production commitments satisfactorily and on time. The faculty and staff recognize that the academic and production assignments within the department, as well as outside employment and other obligations, sometimes impose conflicting pressures on D&T students. One of the main responsibilities of each student is to identify carefully and monitor the commitments that comprise their departmental assignments and outside obligations. It is also important to keep in mind that production work and outside obligations **do not constitute an excused absence** from D&T classes **or from the completion of any required class assignments**.

Class Conduct

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be referred to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

View [UNT's Code of Student Conduct](#) to learn more.

The University of North Texas prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies,

procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Please see additional UNT policies and procedures on the [Student Support Services & Policies](#) page.

Academic Integrity

UNT Honor Code: *"I commit myself to honor, integrity, and responsibility as a student representing the University of North Texas community. I understand and pledge to uphold academic integrity as set forth by UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy, 06.003. I affirm that the work I submit will always be my own, and the support I provide and receive will always be honorable."*

See UNT Policy [06.003, Student Academic Integrity](#)

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. **Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the submission of AI-generated work is not accepted in this course. Any violation of this will result in a full loss of points for the assignment.**

When considering whether to use AI tools in your studies, please consider these guiding principles laid out by the university:

- **Be Transparent** - Clearly disclose when AI tools are used to generate content, make decisions, or assist in communication.
- **Ensure Accountability** - Take full responsibility for any AI-assisted work; do not blame the tool for errors or harmful outcomes.
- **Fact-Check AI Outputs** - Always verify the accuracy and reliability of information produced by AI, especially in research, education, and public communication.
- **Maintain Academic and Professional Integrity** - Do not use AI to cheat, plagiarize, or misrepresent knowledge or work. Follow institutional policies on AI use.
- **Credit and Cite Appropriately** - Acknowledge use of AI tools when relevant, and cite sources if AI outputs include or are based on third-party content.
- **Hallucinations and Fabricated Information** - Generative AI tools may produce content that sounds plausible but is factually incorrect or entirely made up.

- **Lack of True Understanding** - AI tools do not comprehend meaning or context the way humans do—it predicts text based on patterns in data.
- **Bias in Outputs** - AI can reflect or amplify social, cultural, or data-based biases present in its training data.

See UNT [AI policy and FAQs](#)

Sexual Assault Prevention: UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

Sensitive Subject Matter: In this course sensitive subject matters may be discussed. Everyone is expected to treat these moments with the sensitivity and respect they deserve. Racist, misogynistic, homophobic, or any other form of hateful language/action is disruptive and will not be tolerated. All discussions should be civil and courteous. Disagreement and debate is welcome; however, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming online environment. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please email me or meet with me in my virtual office hours. Anyone who finds it difficult to act respectfully toward their classmates and the subject matter may be asked to leave the class.

Student Perceptions of Teaching: Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

Grading

All written work will be submitted on specified due dates. Written work must be typed. AI-generated work, in whole or in part, will receive a grade of 0.

Assignment	Points
Weekly Play Discussion	8 @ 25 points each
Unit Analysis	4 @ 50 points each
Final Project	200 points
Total	**600 points**

Final grade breakdown for points earned:
A = 540-600 points   B = 480 – 539 points   C = 420 - 479 points
D = 360 - 419 points   F = 359 and below

Course Schedule

Here is an outline for the scope of the course. This schedule is subject to minor changes. As a general rule, units conclude on Sunday evenings, and all assignments due by the posted day at 11:59pm.

Unit 1: The Crucible

- Week 1: Crucible Discussion Board due January 21st
- Week 2: Proctor & Proctor Discussion Board due January 25th
- Week 3: Unit 1 Analysis due February 1st

Unit 2: Raisin in the Sun

- Week 1: Raisin Discussion Board due February 8th
- Week 2: Clybourne Park Discussion Board due February 15th
- Week 3: Unit 2 Analysis due February 22nd

Unit 3: A Doll's House

- Week 1: Doll's House Discussion Board due March 1st
- Week 2: Part 1 vs Part 2 Discussion Board due March 8th
- Week 3: Unit 3 Analysis due March 22nd*

*UNT Spring Break March 9-15

Unit 4: Macbeth

- Week 1: The Scottish Play Discussion Board due March 29th
- Week 2: macbitches Discussion Board due April 5th
- Week 3: Unit 4 Analysis due April 12th

Final Project: Podcast

- Podcast Topic due April 19th
- Script Rough Draft due April 26th
- Annotated Bibliography due May 3rd
- **Final Podcast Due: May 6th @ 11:59pm**