

THEA 162/SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Required for all BA Majors and Minors
Required for all BFA Acting, Design/Tech & Musical Theatre Majors

Term: FALL 2016 **Credits:** 3

Meetings: M&W 1-2:15 pm in NFAC 290

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey Stephens

Office: NFAC 211 **Phone:** 346-4706 **Email:** jstephen@uwsp.edu

Office Hours: M & W 10:30-1:00; R 4:15-5:00; F 9:00-12:00

NO OFFICE HOURS TUESDAYS; other times by appt.

Required Texts:

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

Texts Provided by Instructor:

Excerpts (hard copies) from *Introduction to Play Analysis* by Pritner and Walker

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*

PLEASE NOTE:

Do not plan to use translations of dramas that are not the same as those in the Caputi anthology.

Course Description:

The course in script analysis involves exposure to analytical and interpretive techniques used to study play scripts in order to better produce them on the stage. Dramatic theory and theatrical criticism are also important components 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) expanding the student's knowledge of the variety of dramatic texts both in the US and abroad.

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 might 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 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.

Please note that the analysis of dramatic literature requires close reading of the plays assigned as you will be tested on (among other things) both your basic knowledge (i.e., who did what to whom and where), but also your ability to apply a given analytical technique to a script.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- define the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic methods of play analysis;

- define the following descriptive terms: Aristotelian, Shakespearean, Ibsenism, Chekhovian, Realism, Expressionism, Absurdism, Modernism, Postmodernism;
- write a “concept” analysis of a given dramatic text using an objective, not subjective, style;
- 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;
- 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 the 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). **DO NOT TAKE PHOTOS OF THE SCREEN**—always take notes instead. **USE OF YOUR LAPTOP:** Close the screen when you are not actively taking notes. I will count you absent if you fail to do this as well as if you are working on an assignment from a class other than this one. I will ask a student or two to be prepared to assist me in introducing new topics (prior to when those new topics are introduced).

Attendance Policy:

It is your responsibility to attend class. You may miss two class sessions with no penalty. The following scale applies: 1-2 absences, no penalty; 3 absences, 25 pts. deducted from course point total; 4+ absences, course grade dropped one full letter after your point total has been established at the end of term; therefore, if you earn a total of 350 points after all grades have been tabulated, and if you have 4+ absences, the “C-” your point total indicates will be dropped to a “D-.” **NOTE: I will contact your advisor if it appears that you are an unsuitable candidate for your chosen degree path. “Unsuitability” = tardiness, grades below a “C,” texting/speaking out of turn in class, poor writing skills, inability to follow directions, etc. The result of such contact may translate into a probationary period for the student majoring in any emphasis area (BA drama major/minor; BFA D/T, Acting, M/T).**

Exams and Papers:

- **Short in-class analyses of two of the plays** assigned each worth 20 points for a total of **40 points**.
- **Five five-point quizzes** on assigned plays or readings marked with an asterisk (*) for a total of **20 points** (since the lowest score is dropped).
- **Two fifteen-point presentations (30 points total)** on a scene from a required play (assigned during first week of term).
- **Four exams** (including final) at 100 points each for a total of **400 points**. The final is comprehensive. Exams consist of identification (of quotations from plays, of set design as described in stage directions, of characters, of analytical methods), short answer, the application of analytical techniques to various dramas, and short essays.
- A total of **1-10 points** will be distributed by me. These points signify your participation. If I have to ask you to stop talking while I’m talking more than once or if I have to stop class because you are distracting me or others, you will lose these points.

Grading:

Maximum number of points possible: 500. Scale: 450-500 = A; 400-449 = B; 350-399 = C; 300-349 = D; 0-299 = F. UWSP uses + (plus) and – (minus) marks; therefore, within each 50 point range, final letter grades will include a “+” (plus) mark for the top third, no mark for the middle third, and a – (minus) mark for the bottom third. Grades of A+ and F+ do not exist; therefore, if you receive 499 points, for example, you will receive an “A” for the course (not an “A+).

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 may receive zero points for that

assignment and will be referred to your advisor and/or academic dean to begin the review process. This is the first step toward disciplinary action that may result in expulsion from the university.

Disability Services: “It is the policy of the University of Wisconsin System that no otherwise qualified individual is denied access to or participation in any program or activity offered by the University because of a disability. Individuals with disabilities have a right to request accommodations, and individuals will receive appropriate accommodations they need to fully participate in or benefit from the University's programs, services and activities in a non-discriminatory, integrated setting. Pursuant to the System policy, each institution maintains an Office of Disability Services (located in LRC 609 Ph. 346-3365) as a resource for students, faculty, and staff. Students may document a disability and request auxiliary aids from this office.”

Classroom Security: See UWSP Risk Management Department’s website.

Course Schedule (subject to change):

DATE	TOPIC	DUE
W Sept. 7	Introduction to Analysis Dramatic Structure/Theatrical Style Formalist Analysis v. Formalism + Pritner Handout	Pritner Handout (PH)
ARISTOTELIAN		
M Sept. 12	The State of Contemporary Playwrighting Greek Tragedy/Climactic Structure + FREYTAG	<i>How I Learned to Drive</i> * PH
W Sept. 14	Form of Tragedy	<i>Oedipus</i> http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.html Section 1, Parts IV-XI
M Sept. 19	Continued	Aristotelian Analysis In-Class Writing
SHAKESPEAREAN		
W Sept. 21	Shakespearean Tragedy	<i>Hamlet</i> acts I-III; PH
M Sept. 26	Continued + STYLE Handout + Theatrical Space	<i>Hamlet</i> acts IV-V
W Sept. 28	FIRST EXAM	
REALISM/IBSENISM		
M Oct. 3	Ibsen I: Well-Made Play http://www.marxists.org/subject/women/fiction/ibsen/ghosts/	<i>Ghosts</i>
W Oct. 5	Continued	PH
M Oct. 10	Ibsen II: Post- <i>Ghosts</i>	<i>Wild Duck</i> acts I-II;
W Oct. 12	Continued	<i>Wild Duck</i> acts III-V*
M Oct. 17	Anti-Realist Alternatives	In-Class Writing on <i>Wild Duck</i>
CHEKHOVIANISM		
W Oct. 19	Chekhov and the Moscow Art Theatre	<i>Three Sisters</i> acts I-II*; PH
M Oct. 24	Analysis of the <i>Mise-en-Scène</i>	<i>Three Sisters</i> acts III-IV
W Oct. 26	Continued	
M Oct. 31	SECOND EXAM	
W Nov. 2	TBA	

MODERNISM (INC. EXPRESSIONISM)

M Nov. 7 Pirandello
W Nov. 9 Continued

Six Characters in Search of an Author

EPIC

M Nov. 14 Brecht & Piscator
W Nov. 16 Continued

*Mother Courage**; Caputi: 559-564

MID-CENTURY AMERICAN REALISM

M Nov. 21 O'Neill, Hellman, Williams, Miller,
Hansberry, Albee
W Nov. 23 TBA

The Glass Menagerie (On Reserve)

M Nov. 28 Continued from 11/21

ABSURDISM/THE AVANT-GARDE/THE "POSTDRAMATIC"/THE POSTMODERN

W Nov. 30 Beckett

*Happy Days**; PH

M Dec. 5 Continued + Deconstructionist Trends
in the Theatre + Derrida Handout

W Dec. 7 **THIRD EXAM**

M Dec. 12 **PICK UP REVIEW FOR FINAL & PH (Key Terms)**

W Dec. 14 Prep for Final on Own

FINAL EXAM (Comprehensive):

Wednesday, Dec. 21, 8:00-10:00 am

All students must take the final exam when it is scheduled.