

Theatre 110: Theatrical Play Analysis (3 credits)
Fall 2018: Tu/Th 3:00 PM-4:20 PM, 111 Berkey Hall

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Office Hours:
11:15 AM-12:15 PM Tues,
11:30 AM-12:30 PM Wed., &
by appointment

Course Description:

Catalog Description: Play study in relation to theatrical production.

In this course, we will study various methods for reading plays and thinking about production choices. Students will take quizzes or complete in-class worksheets on each of the main plays we read (and on some critical readings), and will write papers on play analysis in action as we view two productions in the MSU Department of Theatre season. We will begin with realism and classical dramaturgy, then move on to discuss challenges to realism and questions of dramatic style. We will conclude with modern and contemporary plays that provide particular staging challenges. Some class sessions will be devoted to mock production meetings in which students will take on the roles of directors and designers. By the end of the course, students should be confident in their ability to read a play and visualize it for the stage.

Required Texts: (Available at Student Book Store, 421 E. Grand River Ave.)

Eight Modern Plays. Ed. Anthony Caputi. 2nd edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 1991.

Euripides, *Bacchae*. Trans. Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999.

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (any edition)

Other texts to be provided online or as photocopies.

Required Productions and Papers:

You will be required to see two MSU Department of Theatre productions this semester, and to write essays about them. You are encouraged to see (and/or participate in) all THR productions.

The Miller Plays runs from September 30-October 9 and *Men on Boats* runs from November 10-20. *Temple* takes place October 21-22. *Carnival of the Absurd* will run from December 1-4. There will probably also be 1-2 student productions in the Second Stage series.

You MUST see *The Miller Plays* and *Men on Boats*. You are encouraged to see *One Good Day* and to participate in *Freshman Showcase*. You may purchase tickets, or you may choose to serve as an usher and see the show for free. (If you are working on the show, you will be able to write a response based on your production assignment. Please talk to me about how to reframe the essay prompt.) DO NOT wait until the last performance to see these shows, especially *Men on Boats*, which is in the smaller Studio theatre. Missing a performance because it is sold-out is not an acceptable excuse. If you would like to usher, please contact Brian de Vries in the main office, 113 Auditorium Building.

Assignments:

Attendance and Participation (10%): Regular attendance and assiduous participation are expected. You should be prepared to make a relevant contribution at least twice during each class discussion. Sleeping, texting, and social media use will have a negative effect on this grade.

Quizzes and in-class assignments (20%): There will be a quiz and/or in class assignment for each play we read, and for some of the critical readings.

Poster Project (10%): Students will design a poster incorporating an image and a short quote that encapsulates the chosen play. The image should give the viewer a sense of the type of production that will be presented.

The Miller Plays Production Response (20%): You will see the production and write a 3-5 page response in which you apply the tools we have learned to examine the play. Due 10/23 at the beginning of class.

Men on Boats Production Response (20%): A 3-5 page response paper analyzing the MSU Department of Theatre production of *Men on Boats* with reference to casting and design. Due 11/20 at the beginning of class.

Final Exam (20%): The take-home final exam will require students to push toward the larger implications of methods of play analysis.

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), a 0.0 for the assignment is automatic. Depending on the gravity of the offense, plagiarism may result in a 0.0 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>

Grading Rubric:

4.0: Excellent work that makes a clear, sophisticated argument and explores subtle nuances. Demonstrates creative thought and a thorough understanding of course materials. Pushes toward larger implications.

3.0: Very good work that articulates an argument and shows solid understanding of course materials, but may lack creativity and may not push to further implications. (Or may demonstrate strong creativity but lack in organization.)

2.0: Acceptable work that makes an attempt at an argument. Shows a general understanding of the material, but may make errors in relation to subtler points. May have some problems with organization.

1.0: Marginally acceptable work that demonstrates major errors of understanding and organization. If creativity is demonstrated, it is done so in a way that is not relevant to the topic of the assignment. Some requirements of the assignment may not be fulfilled.

0.0: Unacceptable work that does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

How Percentages translate to GPA:

93%-100%=4.0

89%-92.9%=3.5

84%-88.9%=3.0

80%-83.9%=2.5

75%-79.9%=2.0

70%-74.9%=1.5

65%-69.9%=1.0

64.9% or less=0

Attendance: You may choose to miss two classes, no excuse necessary, unless there's an exam that day. Missing more than two classes will affect your participation assessment. DoT's policies regarding missing class and attending a rehearsal/performance are in effect for this course.

D2L: This course will use D2L for posting documents and announcements. Please check your MSU email account regularly.

Religious observance: From Provost Youatt, "It is the responsibility of those students who wish to be absent due to religious observance to make arrangements in advance with their instructors. ... As an institution, we are committed to the value of inclusion, and so our practices must conform to our commitments. I am confident that working together we can continue to build an environment that supports and fosters diversity and inclusiveness." Additional information on MSU's Religious Observance policy can be found on the website of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives,

<http://www.inclusion.msu.edu/diversityandinclusion/ReligiousObservance.html>

For students with a disability: I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first week of the semester, so arrangements can be made. Students with a disability should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), 120 Bessey Hall, 517/353-9642 or TTY 517/355-1293. The *University's Disability/Reasonable Accommodations Policy* is available on the web at www.rcpd.msu.edu.

Integrity of Scholarship and Grades: The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles and in so doing protect the validity of University grades. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. (See General Student Regulation 1.00, Scholarship and Grades, for specific regulations.) Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work, so that honest effort will be positively encouraged. Please refer to General Student Regulation 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades at: www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/RegsOrdsPolicies.html.

Spartan Code of Honor

"As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do." For more information visit: honorcode.msu.edu.

Use of Social Media: As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials presented to students are the copyrighted property of the course instructor and are subject to the following conditions of use:

1. Students may not record lectures or any other classroom activities without express written permission of the instructor. If permission is granted, students may only use the recordings only for their own course-related purposes.
2. Students may not share the recordings with other students enrolled in the class. Sharing is limited to using the recordings only for their own course-related purposes.
3. Students may not post the recordings or other course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in the class without the advance written permission of the course instructor and, if applicable, any students whose voice or image is included in the recordings.
4. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions. For more information see <http://acadgov.msu.edu/>

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 syllabi.

As an example, most acting classes allow two unexcused absences. You may use these at any time and it will not affect your attendance at rehearsal or performance. If you miss class again and have exceeded your limit of allowed absences, you will not be allowed to attend that evening’s rehearsal or performance. This is related to all THR and DAN classes.

Honors Option: Honors College students who wish to pursue an Honors Option for this course should speak with the instructor early in the semester. Past H-Options have involved giving a lecture presentation on the historical context of a play studied by the class, or seeing an additional production and writing a paper about it.

Course Schedule (schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class):

Readings are due on the date listed. We will discuss those readings in class that day.

WEEK ONE

Thursday, 8/29 Introductions
 Dramatic Structure and Freytag's Pyramid

WEEK TWO

Tuesday, 9/4 Susan Glaspell, *Trifles* AND "A Jury of Her Peers" (D2L)

Thursday, 9/6 Realism: Henrik Ibsen, *The Wild Duck* (Caputi 3-77) and criticism (443-458)

WEEK THREE:

Tuesday, 9/11 Lajos Egri, "Premise" from *Art of Dramatic Writing* [D2L]; Ibsen cont'd

Thursday, 9/13 Greek Tragedy: Euripides, *Bacchae* (trans. Woodruff)

WEEK FOUR:

Tuesday, 9/18 Classical Dramaturgy: Aristotle, *Poetics* (D2L); *Bacchae*, cont'd

Thursday, 9/20 Modern Tragedy: Arthur Miller, *A View from the Bridge* (one-act version) and "Tragedy and the Common Man" (D2L)

[*One Good Day*, Wharton Center Pasant Theatre, 9/21-9/23]

WEEK FIVE:

Tuesday, 9/25 Realism and Ensemble: Anton Chekhov, *Three Sisters* (Caputi 78-132)
 Plot-Bead Diagram.
 Publicity Poster Project Assigned

Thursday, 9/27 *Three Sisters*, cont'd. Issues of Translation. Read Dassia Posner *Theatre Topics* article linked on D2L. Also read Chekhov letters, Brustein, and Whitaker (Caputi 459-483).

WEEK SIX:

Tuesday, 10/2 *Three Sisters*, cont'd. Issues of Production. Casting exercise.

Thursday, 10/4 Poster Project Due

WEEK SEVEN:

Tuesday, 10/9 Arthur Miller, *A Memory of Two Mondays* (D2L) and Brooks Atkinson review of *A Memory of Two Mondays* and *a View from the Bridge* (D2L)

Thursday, 10/11 Visit with Rob Roznowski, director of *The Miller Plays*

[*The Miller Plays* runs 10/12-10/21 in Wharton Center Pasant Theatre. Required.]

WEEK EIGHT:

Tuesday, 10/16 August Strindberg, *The Ghost Sonata* and criticism (Caputi 183-209 and 502-519)

Tuesday, 10/18 Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and criticism (Caputi 210-256 and 520-538)

WEEK NINE:

Tuesday, 10/23 Begin screening *Theater of War* in class
Miller Plays Essay Due

Thursday, 10/25 Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children* (Caputi 519-547)
Complete *Theater of War* screening

WEEK TEN:

Tuesday, 10/30 *Mother Courage*, cont'd. Read Brecht, Esslin, and Gilman (Caputi 559-579)

Thursday, 11/1 Screen *Changing Stages: Between Brecht and Beckett* video in class

WEEK ELEVEN:

Tuesday, 11/6 Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days* (Caputi 403-426) and criticism (580-608)

Thursday, 11/8 Amiri Baraka, *Dutchman* (D2L)

[*Men on Boats* runs 11/9-11/18 in Auditorium Building, Studio 60 Theatre. Required.]

WEEK TWELVE:

Tuesday, 11/13 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (any edition)

Thursday, 11/15 *Hamlet*, cont'd; Also read *Men on Boats* by Jaclyn Backhaus (D2L)

WEEK THIRTEEN:

Tuesday, 11/20 Discussion of MSU production of Jaclyn Backhaus, *Men on Boats*
Men on Boats essay due

Thursday, 11/22 Thanksgiving: Class will not meet

WEEK FOURTEEN:

Tuesday, 11/27 Caridad Svich, *Twelve Ophelias* (D2L)

Thursday, 11/29 Luis Valdez, *Los Vendidos* (D2L) and *No Saco Nada de la Escuela* (D2L)

WEEK FIFTEEN:

Tuesday, 12/4 Alice Tuan, *Some Asians* (D2L)

Thursday, 12/6 Discussion and review. Prep for Final Exam.

** Take-Home FINAL EXAM due Wednesday, December 12 by 10:00 AM**

We will meet during the final exam time, 10:00AM-12:00 noon to discuss