

## **ADV. THEATRE HISTORY (Advanced History Course-undergraduate)**

Vandy Scoates

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The detailed exploration of theatre history through the lens of Dramaturgy. The course focuses on Script Analysis, Dramatic Theory, historical context of theatre movements and Dramatic Criticism.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- Comprehend, demonstrate, or articulate the value inherent in an artistic, musical, or dramatic creation.
- To read, analyze, discuss, and write about theatre history from the perspective of the performer, director or designer.
- To read, analyze, discuss, and write about how theatre mirrors its social and cultural environments and about what theatre contributes to individuals and society
- To present personal interpretations of dramatic literature in a historical context through dramaturgical research and script analysis

### **TEXTS & MATERIALS:**

#### **REQUIRED TEXT:**

**Script Analysis: for Actors Directors and Designers** 5th Edition by James Thomas Publisher: Focal Press

ISBN-13: 978-0-475-66325-0 E-book ISBN: 978-0-203-79702-0

#### **REQUIRED PLAYS:**

**Hamlet** by **William Shakespeare** Any version accepted. PDF available on Blackboard.

**Three Sisters** by **Anton Chekhov** Paul Schmidt Translation only

(*The Plays of Anton Chekhov* Translated by Paul Schmidt; Publisher: Harper Perennial ; ISBN-13: 978-0060928759)

**Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead** by **Tom Stoppard** Any version accepted. PDF available on Blackboard.

**Angels in America** by **Tony Kushner** Any version accepted. PDF available on Blackboard.

### **PROJECTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

#### **READINGS:**

You must read four (4) plays for the class all of which you will write an initial response (IR). Plays are to be read and IRs done by the due date in order to participate in discussion and reference your IRs in class.

You will also be required to read one additional play in which you will base your semester's study. Plays will be discussed the first day of class.

You will also have two texts books that your will need throughout the semester: *Script Analysis* and *Backwards and Forwards*. A PDF of *Backwards and Forwards* will be provided for you on blackboard and can also be found on Scribd.

**WRITTEN WORK:**

**Journal Entries- Reflective Writing (6% of Final Grade):**

After each student presents a journal entry will be due discussing that presentation. These must be at least 200 words and speak to the following aspects of the presentation:

- What play did the person present on?
- What genre does this play fit into?
- Who are some notable playwrights and plays from that genre?
- Was there anything you learned from the presentation that you did not know before? What was it?
- What did you think of the presentation? Was there anything that may have been or will be useful in your presentation?

Journal Entries are due one week after the presentation was made (at 11:59pm) and are submitted on Blackboard. (If there is a presentation on *The Piano Lesson* and/or *Clean House* the journal will be due on the final exam day). The number of journals (and credit worth for each journal) throughout the semester will depend on course enrollment. Late journal entries will not be accepted.

You will have a reflection Journal on Ch.3: Background Story since some of you may be missing class due to ACTF. This journal is due 1% of your final grade and will include:

- A summary of the chapter in your own words
  - An outline of your notes taken on the chapter
  - An example of a background story for any play (other than *Hamlet*)

**Production Response- Formal Writing (8% of Final Grade):**

Respond to **one (1)** of two (2) productions You may write your production response on a show in which you are acting or on the crew if necessary. Do not wait until the last day to see the show and get your tickets early. I am looking for a clear and concise 2-3 page, double spaced paper in Garamond 12 pt. font.

Review should include:

- A detailed description of plot and production elements using terms we learned in class. Include specific references from the text that relate to at least 3 parts of action analysis.
- A production rationale: Why do you think it was designed, acted, & directed this way?
- What historical period and/or genre might this play fall into? Give 2 reasons to back your argument.
- Could this plays' message resonate in a period other than the one it was written in/set?
- What moment or visual aspect of the production affected you the greatest and why?
- If you were to make a collage for this show, what might it be?

**Initial Responses (IR) to Course Texts- Informal Writing (16% of Final Grade):**

You will write 4 Initial Responses (IR) to the texts we will read for the course (*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, *Three Sisters* By Anton Chekhov, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard, *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner). The IR should be written after the first reading of the script. A second reading should be done to add and complete the IR. You should complete the six (6) areas of the IR (below) using the Symbols (in Bold parenthesis) as short hand.

1. Positives (+): At least three positives things about the script.
2. Negatives (-): At least three negative/challenging things about the script.
3. Questions (?): any questions that you have after the initial reading
4. Cracks (\*): Any “ways into” the script for you. Things that touched you or made you understand the play better within the writing.
5. Audio/Visual (A/V): Any Audio or visual components found in the dialogue or stage directions including lights, sets, costumes and sound.
6. Concretes (!): Things that are mandatory for the play to work and that the playwright’s intent be understood by the audience. These can be period requirements, design elements, casting needs etc...

**SEMESTER PLAY PROJECTS:**

**DRAMATURGICAL PRESENTATION (20% of Final Grade):**

Every student will give a presentation on play/Playwright/genre for the class. The presentation dates will be assigned and you must present on your assigned day. You will present at the beginning of class and will be ready to start at 9:30am on your assigned day.

Your presentation will be a mini/ initial presentation of your dramaturgical finding. Please refer to the “Dramaturgy Breakdown Handout” on Blackboard for info that should be included. **Your presentation must be 20-30 min long and will include:**

- Brief synopsis of play
- Synopsis of your script analysis for the play
- Research of historical Period in which the play was written
- Research of historical Period in which the play was set
- Other influential playwrights and plays from that genre other than the one you read/talk about - Biography of playwright
- What long reaching effects did the play have on the history of theatre?
- Describe the first production of the play
- Reference one well received and one ill-received production of the play
- How did this play influence the history of performance or design?

**You will be marked down 5% of the project grade for every one (1) minute your presentation is UNDER the 20-minute minimum.** If you are absent the day of your presentation you will receive a zero (0) for the assignment. You may switch with a classmate if you find you have to be absent on the day you signed up for but, you must meet with me and the person you are planning on switching with 2 weeks prior to the day you will be absent. Best thing to do: choose a day YOU KNOW YOU WILL BE THERE. Acceptations to missing a presentation will only be granted for medical emergencies.

Along with your presentation you will provide:

-A detailed outline of your presentation (Informal Writing) -A printed or digital version of your presentation for the class -A work cited page

- In correct MLA format

## **ADV. THEATRE HISTORY (Advanced History Course-undergraduate)**

Vandy Scoates

-Your work cited MUST include at least 10 sources, five (5) of which are NOT from the internet. (PDF links from library/journals will be accepted).

- At least two (2) of your works cited must be from a peer reviewed-journal and at least two (2) must be from a review of a production of your play. Please see me in advance if you are having trouble finding reviews.

You will read a play (provided) chosen from the list below. You will email me you 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice of plays/dates from the list below. I will assign the plays on a first come first serve basis and will announce assignments during the next class period . Please choose your play/date wisely as you will be studying this play the rest of the semester and will put a great deal of time into researching it.

**Presentations will be made on the following genres/plays:**

1. *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles {+10% Bonus}
2. *Tartuffe* by Moliere {+8% Bonus}
3. *The School for Scandal* by Richard Sheridan {+4% Bonus}
4. *The Wild Duck* by Henrik Ibsen {+2% Bonus}
5. *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov
6. *Springs Awakening* by Frank Wedekind
7. *Mother Courage and Her Children* by Bertolt Brecht
8. *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller
9. *Okelahoma* by Rodgers and Hammerstein
10. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe* by Edward Albee
11. *Happy Days* by Smauel Beckett
12. *American Buffalo* by David Mamet
13. *Top Girls* by Carol Churchill
14. *The Piano Lesson* by August Wilson
15. *Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl

### **FINAL PAPER: Script Analysis of Show- Formal Writing (20% of Final Grade):**

You will write a final paper based on your script analysis and interpretation of the play you have chosen to study throughout the semester. Your script analysis will serve as a starting point and guide post for your paper and a rough draft of the script analysis will be due after spring break. You will also turn in an outline and a draft a different points during the semester.

Your paper should be 10-20 pages long (12 pt. Garamond font, double spaced) and will included your interpretation of the play based on your script analysis and dramaturgical research. Though this is not a research paper, your research will influence your interpretation (and/or re-contextualization) of the play and should be cited in your paper's bibliography. You may use the same sources as your Casebook. The components of the paper will be graded as such:

#### **Final Paper- Due on Final Exam Day (10%)**

- Integrate all areas of the script analysis covered in course textbook (2%)
- Revisions from draft (1%)
- Have a Clear and Concise thesis (2%)
- Have supporting evidence for thesis (2%)
- Organized writing with clear intent and opinion (1%)
- No spelling or grammatical errors (1%)
- Proper bibliography with a minimum of 10 sources (non-annotated please) (1%)

#### **Rough Script Analysis (2.5%)**

**Outline- Due 3/22**

**Draft-Due (5%)**

**FINAL PROJECT- CASEBOOK (20% of Final Grade)-**

Please refer to the “Dramaturgy Breakdown Handout for specifics. The following items will be present in your DRAMATURGY CASEBOOK:

- (IR) Initial Response- (10% of Project)
- Updated Script Analysis (10% of Project)
- Source Materials- (10% of Project): Detailed information/research from any/all of the above script analysis
- Playwright Biographical Information- (5% of Project) Biographical information that may be relevant to the play
- Historical Context -(10% of Project): Information about the period of the playwright and period in which it is set
- Supplemental information-(15% of Project): Information and research into alternative texts, psychology, Myth and Archetype, and Actor Packet information
- Production History- (10% of Project): Including first production and translations/versions
- Critical Articles-(10% of Project) Relevant reviews of productions
- Glossary- (10% of Project): Detailed definitions and information on all terms, locations, and names.
- Annotated Bibliography- (10% of Project)

COLLAGE: You may also include a collage that expresses your plays essence in physical form. The collage can be anything as long as it is a physical object and speaks to the play. **The colleague is not mandatory but will be worth 15% extra credit.** Examples will be discussed in class.

**EXTRA CREDIT:**

Seeing a fully realized production in or outside of the school, reading the play and writing a production response that includes specific references to the text will count for 6% extra credit. The extra credit production can be one at Limestone College, another college or theatre in the area. All productions must be approved by the instructor prior to due date of production response. You may do a total of two (2) extra credit responses.

You may also do a colleague with your dramaturgy book that will count for 15% extra credit.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION (20% of final grade):**

This class is based on discussions and learning from your classmates. You must actively participate in discussions and answer questions in order to succeed. If you are not in class you cannot participate so excessive absences will also contribute to your participation grade.

I consider good class participation to be:

- Active listening
- Asking and answering questions
- Participating in class discussions
- Making helpful comments on your classmates’ and your own work
- Keeping up with assignments and readings in order to be informed for discussions