

**SCRIPT ANALYSIS**  
**THEA3322**  
**T/Th 9:00-10:20 Fox 180**  
**FALL 2016**

Professor: Kim McKean  
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Office: TBD  
Office Hours: M/W 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course provides actors, designers, and directors with the tools needed for breaking down and analyzing scripts intended for production. Using the framework of Aristotle’s Formalist Analysis and David Ball’s “backwards and forwards” approach, we will explore given circumstances, dramatic structure, theme, language, character development, beats, social context, and mise-en-scene within a range of classic, contemporary, and post-modern texts. The semester will culminate in a creative presentation within the student’s area of interest.

**Learning Goals**

Upon successful completion of this course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate how detailed analysis of scripts enriches artistic work and unlocks the artist’s creativity.
- Create a formal analysis of play scripts of various styles intended for production.
- Define story structure and how it relates to script analysis.
- Engage in provocative discussions about play scripts using standard terminology and concepts from dramatic criticism.
- Translate concepts from class to your own creative work.

**Required Texts**

*Backwards & Forwards, A Technical Manual for Reading Plays* by David Ball  
*Script Analysis for Actors, Directors, and Designers*, Fifth Edition, by James Thomas  
*Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov, translated by Sarah Ruhl  
*Doubt* by John Patrick Shanley  
*Water by the Spoonful* by Quiara Alegria Hudes

**Evaluation Criteria**

All paperwork must be typed, double spaced, and printed.

1. Participation .....	10%
2. Reflection .....	10%
3. Paper 1 (Analysis of <i>Doubt</i> ).....	20%
4. Paper 2 (Formal Analysis of <i>Three Sisters</i> or <i>Water by the Spoonful</i> ).....	20%
5. Final Creative Project.....	20%
6. Final Exam.....	20%

## **Participation**

Active participation is vital to your growth as artists and to your success in this class. You will be expected to come to class fully prepared, actively engage in class discussions, and thoughtfully complete in-class assignments. Class periods will include small group discussions and exercises, creative projects, and reflective written assignments. Absences, lateness, lack of preparation, or non-participation will lower your grade significantly—**each absence after two lowers your overall grade a whole letter grade. Three tardies are equivalent to one absence.** Share your voice and ask questions. Challenge yourself to speak up at least once a class period.

## **Reflections**

The writing reflection is a one-to-two page response (no longer than two pages) about course concepts and how they relate to the play in production at UTEP this semester, *House on Mango Street*. Reflections must be typed, printed out, and have the ticket stub stapled to the paper. No late reflections will be accepted. More specific details on these assignments will be distributed throughout the semester. Grading rubric will be distributed.

## **Final Exam**

There will be a final exam covering concepts covered in class.

## **Paper 1**

Apply the concepts of Aristotle, Thomas and Ball to *Doubt*  
3-4 pages, 20 points total

## **Paper 2**

Complete a formalist analysis of *Three Sisters* or *Water by the Spoonful*  
5-6 pages, 20 points total

## **Final Creative Project**

The final project for this class can be done individually or with a group (4 students max). You will choose a contemporary play and present a 10-15 minute creative presentation on the play. Presentations should demonstrate analytical skills studied in class and may include a design presentation, a director's "look book" or creative approach, a dramaturgical notebook, an original adaptation of a text as a play script or screenplay, a 10 minute scene memorized and presented at "performance" level, a short film adapted from the text, a music video, or a movie trailer. Proposals for other ideas for presentations will be considered as well. Along with the presentation you must complete a project proposal (due at the end of October) and a written evaluation and rubric of your and your classmates work (1-2 pages). The grading breakdown is as follows:

Project Proposal—2.5 points

Creative Presentation—15 points

Written Evaluation—2.5 points

## **Academic Integrity**

Any incident of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. This includes cheating and plagiarism. Please visit <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/> for more information.

### **Disability Accommodations**

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at UTEP provides students with disabilities, accommodations and support services to help them pursue their academic, graduation, and career goals. For more information, visit <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>.

### **Subject Matter**

The scripts studied in this course deal with mature subject matters. Consequently, much of the discussion in class will require discussion of adult subject matter and language. If you have concerns, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. All classroom discussions must be held in a respectful and professional matter.

### **Electronic Devices**

No electronic devices allowed in class unless permission is given beforehand. Students using electronic devices in class will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

### **Schedule of Classes & Assignments**

*(subject to change)*

*\*the reading and assignments are due the day they are listed*

Week	Date	IN CLASS	Assignment(s) Due
1	T 8/23	Intro, Syllabus, and "The First Read"	
	R 8/25	<i>Lessons from the Past: Aristotle and The Poetics</i> <i>Aristotelian Analysis Exercise.</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thomas, <i>Introduction</i></li></ul>
2	T 8/30	<i>Lessons from the Past continued: Influential Thinkers on Script Analysis</i> <i>Aristotelian Analysis Exercise.</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thomas, Chapter 2</li></ul>
	R 9/1	"The First Steps in Preparation" <i>Doubt</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Doubt</i></li><li>• "Survey of Current Practices" from Blackboard</li></ul>
3	T 9/6	Givens in <i>Doubt—Compiling Evidence</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thomas, Chapter 3</li><li>• Ball, 39-44</li></ul>
	R 9/8	Givens in <i>Doubt—Organizing the Facts</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ball Part 1</li><li>• (Pages 3-36)</li></ul>
4	T 9/13	Givens in <i>Doubt—Reading between the Scenes</i>	

	R 9/15	Stasis, Intrusion, and Aristotelian Analysis in <i>Doubt</i>	
5	T 9/20	Events and Events backward in <i>Doubt</i>	
	R 9/22	The World of the Play for <i>Doubt</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EF's <i>The World of the Play</i> in blackboard</li> </ul>
6	T 9/27	The World of the Play for <i>Doubt</i>	World of the Play presentations
	R 9/29	Character Bones in <i>Three Sisters</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Three Sisters</i></li> </ul> Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Chapter 6 Ball, pages 60-91</li> </ul>
7	T 10/4	Relationship web and "Suffering" in <i>Three Sisters</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Chapter 6 Ball, pages 60-91</li> </ul> <b>Reflection 1 Due</b>
	R 10/6	Progression and Structure and "French Scenes" in <i>Three Sisters</i> ,	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Chapter 5 Ball, 92-95</li> </ul>
8	T 10/11	The "Director Breakdown" and "Scene Objectives" in <i>Three Sisters</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Chapter 4</li> </ul>
	R 10/14	The "Moment Chain" and Internal/External Action in <i>Three Sisters</i>	<b>Paper 1 Due</b>
9	T 10/18	Discuss <i>Three Sisters</i> in relationship to Aristotelian model.	Present one-sentence project with image.

	R 10/20	Discuss Idea, Image, and “Seed” in <i>Three Sisters</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas, Chapter 7 Ball, pages 60-91</li> </ul>
10	T 10/25	Playing Space Analysis in <i>Three Sisters</i>	<b>Project Proposal Due</b>
	R 10/27	“The First Steps in Preparation” <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Water by the Spoonful</i></li> </ul>
11	T 11/1	Character, Relationship Web, and Suffering in <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	
	R 11/3	Dialogue in <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Water by the Spoonful</i></li> <li>• Thomas, Chapter 8</li> </ul>
12	T 11/8	Tempo, Rhythm and Mood in <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	Reading: Thomas Chapter 9  VOTE!
	R 11/10	Idea and Image in <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	
13	T 11/15	Putting it all together—thinking as a designer, actor, or director and GUT CHECK for <i>Water by the Spoonful</i>	Reading: Thomas, Chapter 10
	R 11/17	Putting it all together—thinking as a designer, actor, or director and GUT CHECK for <i>Water by the Spoonful</i> continued...  Instructor check in with creative presentation groups	
14	T 11/22	Creative Presentations 1	<b>Creative Evals due when you present</b>
	R 11/24	No class—Happy Thanksgiving!	
15	T 11/29	Creative Presentations 2	<b>Creative Evals due when you present</b>
	R 12/1	Final Review	<b>Paper 2 Due</b>