

SCRIPT ANALYSIS
THEA3322
F 10:30-12:50 Fox 180
FALL 2018

Professor: Kim McKean
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Office: Worrell 114
Office Hours: M/W 10:30-11:30am
(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, 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. Several hands-on, practical techniques in script analysis will be employed as well. 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 evaluated through the final presentation.

Required Texts

Script Analysis for Actors, Directors, and Designers, Fifth Edition, by James Thomas
The Seagull by Anton Chekhov (check with me about edition)
Doubt by John Patrick Shanley
Sweat by Lynn Nottage

Recommended Text

Backwards & Forwards, A Technical Manual for Reading Plays by David Ball
The Director's Craft by Katie Mitchell
How to Read a Play by Damon Kiely

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Complete assigned reading on time. Take notes and be prepared to discuss the text.
- Complete all Blackboard assignments thoughtfully and on-time.

- Attend performances of *Bless Me Ultima* and the *UTEP Fall Dance Show*. (Bonus for *Xmas Carol* and Dinner Theatre shows).
- Complete final analysis paper.
- Share final creative presentation (along with a visual aid) with the class.
- Come to class ON TIME and ready to work. **Work with positivity and respect.**
- Meet scheduled deadlines and turn in assigned work on time. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Be prepared to participate in all classroom discussions and exercises.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Due to the nature of this course, attendance at every session is mandatory. You will be allowed **ONE** “unexcused” absences during the semester. **Each absence after ONE lowers your overall grade a whole letter grade. For example, a ‘B’ becomes a ‘C.’ Three tardies are equivalent to one absence.** If there is an emergency or illness, I will review options for making up the work, but you must document the reason for the absences prior to the review. **SAVE YOUR ABSENCES FOR WHEN YOU REALLY NEED IT.**

EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

1. UTEP Show Attendance.....	5%
2. UTEP Show Observational Statement.....	5%
3. Participation	15%
4. Class Exercises (includes small group presentations and handouts)	15%
5. Blackboard Assignments.....	20%
6. Analysis Paper (Analysis of <i>The Seagull</i> or <i>Doubt</i>).....	20%
7. Final Creative Project on <i>Sweat</i>	20%

EVALUATION CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

1. UTEP SHOW ATTENDANCE

You must see all productions produced by the Department of Theatre and Dance this fall, including *Bless Me Ultima* and the *UTEP Fall Dance Show*. (Please see *Xmas Carol* too, but this is not a course requirement since it opens after the semester is over). There are ushering opportunities for every show (ushers see the show for free) and specific discounted nights for every production. You are required to upload a picture of your ticket stub attached to your program to Blackboard the week after the show closes. If you are in the show or working on the show email me in advance to make other arrangements.

A NOTE ON SUBJECT MATTER FOR REQUIRED SHOWS

The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing on stage. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations.

2. UTEP Show Observational Statement

A written critical statement analyzing UTEP’s production of *Bless Me Ultima*. Analysis should relate to course concepts, and is due the Friday after the show closes. You can still do this if you are working on the production. Responses should be uploaded to Blackboard by the due date listed. No late work will be accepted unless pre-determined with me.

3. 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 on-time and fully prepared, actively engage in class discussions, and give your all to class exercises. Share your voice! We only get better by asking questions and taking risks.

4. CLASS EXERCISES

Includes all work done in class and prepared for class. This includes exercises, written assignments, small group presentations and handouts. You will be evaluated on preparation, work ethic, professional standards, and ability to apply course concepts.

5. BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout the semester there will be 3 online assignments on Blackboard that are related to course concepts. Due dates are listed on the syllabus and each assignment will be explained in detail.

6. ANALYSIS PAPER

Apply course concepts to an analysis paper on *Doubt* or *The Seagull*

4-5 pages, 20 points total

Evaluation Rubric and more information will be provided.

7. FINAL CREATIVE PROJECT

The final project for this class can be done individually or with a group (4 students max).

You will present a 10-15 minute creative presentation on *Sweat*. 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 educational packet, 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 beginning of November) and a written evaluation of how you are you classmates divided up the work. The grading breakdown is as follows:

Project Proposal—1.5 points

Creative Presentation—17 points

Written Evaluation—1.5 points

For all work done outside of class, if a student misses a scene rehearsal or group meeting with another student or students, that student's grade drops by 25% for the first missed meeting or rehearsal; and receives a 0 (zero) on the assignment for a second missed meeting or rehearsal.

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.

SUBJECT MATTER

The scripts and scenes studied in this course deal with mature subject matters. Consequently, some 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.

RESPECT

The work in this class may elicit a strong emotional response. In order for this work to be done respectfully, it is crucial that the classroom be a SAFE PLACE. Absolutely no bullying, gossiping, or judgement will be tolerated. Any student who is not contributing to a safe, creative, work environment will be asked to leave class and receive an absence for that class period. *Any student who engages in conduct that is harassment of any University community member, including sexual harassment as defined in Section VI. in the UTEP Handbook may be subject to discipline.*

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. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. For more information, visit <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>.

Grading Scale

A = 90%-100%

B = 80% - 89%

C = 70% - 79%

D = 60% - 69%

F = 0% - 59%

“**A**”—indicates exceedingly high quality work. Masters all assigned work, completes work on time, shows originality and initiative, does more than required, and makes quality contributions in class.

“**B**”—indicates good progress, above the average, masters portions of the work, is alert and shows an interest in the work, completes work on time, and offers good discussion points in class.

“**C**”—indicates a quality of work acceptable at this level. Satisfactorily completes most assigned work under normal conditions and direction, shows interest in work, and completes work on time.

“**D**”—indicates that although most assignments may be completed there is a need for greater effort to meet the expected level of work for this course, student is hesitant to engage in the work or at times shows little interest, and seldom responds in class.

“**F**”—indicates failure to produce an accepted quality of work for this course.

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	F 8/31	Intro, Syllabus, and “Why We Read Plays” <i>Aristotelian Analysis Exercise “LOU” movie</i>	
2	F 9/7	Lessons from the Past: Aristotle and The Poetics What is formalist play analysis? <i>Aristotelian Analysis Exercise, Short Play in Class</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Aristotle” articles on Blackboard (2 Articles)• Anne Bogart Article• Thomas, <i>Introduction</i> *BY 5:00 PM ON 9/12 COMPLETE ONLINE ASSIGNMENT 1 ON BLACKBOARD
3	F 9/14	The First Steps in Preparation” <i>Doubt</i> <i>Givens in Doubt—Compiling Evidence, Organizing the Facts, Reading Between the Scenes</i> Given Circumstance Presentation in Groups	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Doubt</i>• Thomas, Chapter 2 (p. 41-65, 70, 71)
4	F 9/21	Stasis, Intrusion, and Events in <i>Doubt</i> <i>Aristotelian Analysis and Story Mountain in Doubt</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Shape” article in Blackboard• Thomas, pages 145-154

5	F 9/28	Kim Out of Town TETA Conference The World of the Play for <i>Doubt</i> World of the Play presentations in Class	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EF's <i>The World of the Play</i> in blackboard <p>*BY 5:00 PM ON 9/30 COMPLETE ONLINE ASSIGNMENT 2 ON BLACKBOARD</p>
6	F 10/5	Relationship web and "Suffering" and Character Bones/Objectives/Unseen Characters in <i>The Seagull</i>	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: <i>The Seagull</i> • Thomas, p. 172-196 • "Missing Persons" Article Blackboard
7	F 10/12	Deeper Work on Character: Character Biographies and Moment in Before in <i>The Seagull</i> <i>Present Character Bio and Casting Choice in Class</i>	
8	F 10/19	Analyzing the Action of the Play: Beats in <i>The Seagull</i> Scenic Breakdown in <i>The Seagull</i> Naming the Scenes in <i>The Seagull</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas, p. 133-144 • "Analyzing the Action of the Play" article in Blackboard <p>ULTIMA RESPONSE DUE IN BLACKBOARD</p>
9	F 10/26	The "Director Breakdown" in <i>The Seagull</i>	
10	F 11/2	Investigating the Big Ideas: Idea, Image, and Seed in <i>The Seagull</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas, p. 204-226 • Thomas, Chapter 10

11	F 11/9	“The First Steps in Preparation” <i>Sweat</i>	Project Proposal Due Reading: SWEAT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
12	F 11/16	Dialogue, Tempo, Rhythm and Mood in <i>Sweat</i>	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas, Chapter 8 • Thomas, Chapter 9 *BY 5:00 PM ON 11/18 COMPLETE ONLINE ASSIGNMENT 3 ON BLACKBOARD
13	F 11/23	NO CLASS, HAPPY THANKSGIVING	
14	F 11/30	Putting it all together—thinking as a designer, actor, or director in <i>Sweat</i> —What are the events?	
15	F 12/7	NO CLASS, DEAD DAY	PAPER DUE AT MY OFFICE BY 5:00PM
FINAL	F 12/14 10:00am- 12:45PM	CREATIVE PRESENTATIONS ON <i>SWEAT</i>	