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# THEA 2367 02

## Text Analysis for the Theatre

CRN: 81739      Fall 2017  
MWF 1 – 1:50 PM / CJ A209

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*I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.*  
—Oscar Wilde

### Catalogue Description

This course examines the methodology for analyzing dramatic masterworks primarily as tools for the theatre craftsman and emphasizes the importance of this practical skill for actors, directors, designers and playwrights. While focusing on the dramatic structure of a script in various plays, this course will concurrently examine the playwright's social and cultural milieu. Credit 3. Prerequisite: THEA 1364.

### Course Description

“A play is a blueprint for production.” A play (text) presents theatre practitioners with a nearly infinite set of possibilities for production; how, then, do practitioners approach and analyze the text in order to arrive at the most poignant, pertinent, and performative interpretation(s)? In this course, we will study David Ball’s methods of reading and analyzing plays in an attempt to answer this question.

This course examines the practical skill of analyzing scripts for actors, directors, designers, playwrights and teachers. Through investigating various dramatic texts and treating them primarily as tools for the theatre craftsman, we will examine the dramatic structure of a script while concurrently examining the social and cultural events of the playwright’s world.

During our lecture/discussions this semester, we will explore dramatic theory as it affects playwriting and analysis. We also will consider how different critical lenses affect our perception, understanding, and evaluation of the plays.

### **Course Goals:**

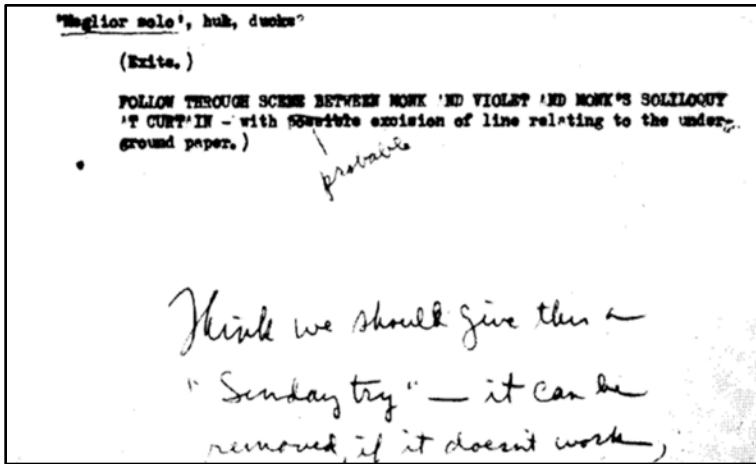
- To find the tools necessary for thorough script analysis over a wide range of dramatic styles and genres.
- To gain a basic understanding of scripts through analyzing them as a map for the theatre practitioner.
- To learn the tools of discovering meaning through textual building blocks.
- To be able to articulate interpretation of text collaboratively as theatre practitioners.
- To make the analysis of plays a practical tool for making informed creative choices to utilize in performance.
- To understand how people may have profoundly different interpretations of and critical responses to a text based on their own personal and cultural contexts.
- To understand the role and value of written criticism to the life and development of theatre production.

THIS SYLLABUS, SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GRADES CAN BE FOUND ON THE BLACKBOARD WEBSITE-PLEASE CHECK IT FREQUENTLY!

<http://blackboard.shsu.edu>

## Required Texts

You are responsible for reading one textbook and seven plays, as well as scenes and short plays in class.



- David Ball's *Backwards and Forwards*

All plays are posted to Blackboard.

- Kristopher Diaz's *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*
- Laura Gunderson's *Silent Sky*
- Sophocles' *Antigone*
- William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
- Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*
- Suzan-Lori Parks' *The America Play*
- Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*

Note: Our Newton Grisham Library has copies of all of these plays.

### Grade Breakdown

<u>Grade Breakdown</u>	<u>Points</u>
Participation*	100 (10% of grade)
<i>Antigone</i> Adaptation Project	100 (10% of grade)
Library Resources Project	100 (10% of grade)
<i>The America Play</i> Design Group Project	150 (15% of grade)
<i>Angels</i> Dramaturgy Project	150 (15% of grade)
8 Analytic Exercises (25 points each)	200 (20% of grade)
2 In-class Exams (100 points each)	200 (20% of grade)

**1000 TOTAL**

GRADING SCALE
900-1000 pts — A
800-899 pts — B
700-799 pts — C
600-699 pts — D
599 and below — F

\*This grade is tied to the following: attendance, on time arrival, taking notes, asking questions, answering questions, active involvement in discussions. In other words, **active** participation with the course.

**4 points for attending each of the five UTC fall productions = 20 points max**

- Easy; just show ticket stubs to me.

**You will receive detailed instructions for assignments and exams in class throughout the semester.**

### CLASSROOM POLICIES

**Attendance Policy:** By university policy for classes that meet three times each week (MWF classes), you may not be penalized for up to 3 absences, nor may you be penalized for any absence due to pre-approved religious observance; anything beyond that depends on the instructor's discretion.

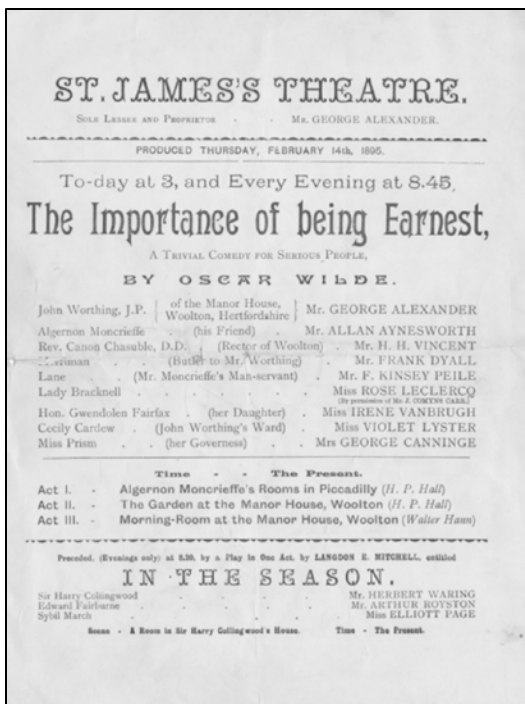
- After 3 absences, you will be penalized -3 points from your final course grade for each additional absences.
- There are no excused or unexcused absences. You must always take full responsibility for classes missed. However, should serious issues arise, there needs to be written communication (email with specific dates, times, and reason) from the Dean of Students Office.

**Late & Makeup Work:** You may make up a test or submit a project late only if you have legitimate and documented reason approved by the Dean of Students Office, e.g., university obligation, hospitalization, court appearance, jury duty, funeral. The Office of the Dean of Students is located in the Lohman Student Center; just take your document(s) to that office, which, in turn, will notify all of your professors

by e-mail. Any project submitted late will be penalized one letter grade (-10 points) for each week overdue.

**Classroom Conduct:** Food and candy are not permitted in the classroom. Beverages are permitted as long as they are in spill-proof containers. Unless otherwise noted, laptops and tablets are not permitted. Please turn off cell phones and refrain from texting during class.

**Office:** I will have a sign-up sheet on my office door for appointments (for class and/or advising). If you have questions or concerns, please come talk with me; that's what office hours are for. A brief question before or after class is fine; however, anything substantial should be addressed at another time, when the professor is not setting up or striking class. Please realize that we have personal and professional lives beyond SHSU and are not available 24/7. Please allow 24 hours response time for email and voice mail.



## Weekly Schedule (subject to change)

Day	Month	Date	Class Focus
W	AUG	23	Introduction to the Course
F		25	Introduction to Text Analysis
M		28	<b>READ: Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity, Analytic # 1 Due</b>
W		30	<b>READ: Backwards and Forwards—pps. 81-96</b>
F	SEPT	1	<b>READ: Backwards and Forwards—pps. 3-36</b>
M		4	– Labor Day – University Closed
W		6	Aristotle, definitions of tragedy, structure of plays
F		8	<b>READ: Antigone, Analytic # 2 Due</b>
M		11	<i>Antigone</i> and Formula, <b>Analytic # 3 Due</b>
W		13	<b>READ: Backwards and Forwards—pps. 37-79</b>
F		15	<i>Trying to Find Chinatown</i> (In-class)
M		18	Reader Response: race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, <b>Analytic # 4 Due</b>
W		20	Audience/Production vs. Reader/Text
F		22	<b>READ: Silent Sky, Analytic # 5 Due</b>

M		25	Criticism: Others responding to our artistic choices
W		27	<b>READ: Hamlet</b>
F		29	More <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>Hamlet</i> on film, <b>DUE: Antigone</b> Projects

**\*SHSU Production *Silent Sky*, Sept 27 -Sept 30\***

M	OCT	2	<i>Silent Sky</i> Q&A
W		4	Exam Prep, more <i>Hamlet</i>
F		6	<b>IN-CLASS EXAM 1</b>
M		9	<b>Library Day</b>
W		11	<b>READ: <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>, Analytic # 6 Due</b>
F		13	Props and visuals / <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>

**\*SHSU Production *The Government Inspector*, Oct 11 - Oct 14\***

M		16	<i>The Government Inspector</i> Q&A
W		18	Counter-Aristotelian modes in plays
F		20	<i>The Bald Soprano</i>
M		23	<b>READ: short Beckett plays, Analytic # 7 Due</b>
W		25	Design and visual narratives
F		27	Group Design Prep, <b>DUE: Library</b> Projects

**\*SHSU Production Directors' Debut/*Raisin* Reading, Oct 24 - Oct 28\***

M		30	<b>READ: <i>The America Play</i></b>
W	NOV	1	Group Design Prep
F		3	Group Design Prep
M		6	Group <i>The America Play</i> PRESENTATIONS DUE
W		8	Group <i>The America Play</i> PRESENTATIONS DUE
F		10	Dramaturgy and Asking Questions
M		13	<b>READ: <i>Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches</i>, Analytic #8 Due</b>
W		15	Dramaturgy and <i>Angels</i>
F		17	<b>watch part of HBO <i>Angels in America</i></b>

**\*SHSU Production *Oklahoma*, Nov 15 - Nov 18\***

M		20	<i>Oklahoma</i> Q&A
W		18	<b>Thanksgiving Break!</b>
F		20	<b>Thanksgiving Break!</b>
M		23	Wrap Up
W		25	<b>IN-CLASS EXAM 2</b>
F		27	Off for Juries
M	DEC	4	<b>DUE: <i>Angels</i></b> Dramaturgy Project, online through Blackboard

***IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP TRACK OF DUE DATES***

*The instructor reserves the right to change or alter the calendar to meet the individual and unique needs of the course. You are responsible for noting any and all changes to the syllabus.*

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### **Academic Honesty**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Any students found cheating on exams, or plagiarizing papers will FAIL the course.

### **Classroom Environment**

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and peers with respect and dignity. Section 5.2.22 in the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines classroom disturbances as any activity which proves distracting to the learning environment including but not limited to the use of cell phones or text messaging; the reading of materials (newspapers, magazines, texts) not assigned to the class; the use of profanity or abusive behavior toward the instructor or other students; having off-topic conversations which disturb or disrupt the learning environment; the use of computers and/or other electronic devices (IPods, MP3 players, etc.) during classroom instruction, therefore, as a result, under no circumstances are cell phones or any other electronic devices to be used or seen during classroom instruction or examination. Even the visible presence of such a device during an examination will result in a zero on that examination. All such devices should be turned off or put in a silent mode and not be taken out during class. **Violations of the code of conduct will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with this policy will result in expulsion from the classroom and may at the instructor's discretion result in the student(s) being referred for disciplinary action to the Dean of Students.** Any assignments missed because of disciplinary action cannot be submitted for a grade.

### **Students with Disabilities Policy:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

### **Religious Holy Days**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

### **Visitors in the Classroom**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.