

INTRODUCTION TO DRAMATIC ARTS



Fall 2014
Section #:11226
Bellefield Hall, Rm 314
Tues/Thur 1 - 2:15

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Office Hours: Thursday, 10:30 - 12:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the study of dramatic texts both in their written and live forms. We will consider the relationships between different employments of story telling and the historical circumstances that influenced them.

Script analysis (the examination of how a play is put together) will be accompanied by interpretation: how a play and its structural characteristics offer possible meanings on the page and on the stage. As play texts are blueprints for production, we will explore how script analysis can inform choices in the visualizing and staging of a play in time and space for an intended audience.

Students will apply concepts learned in class through written and oral individual and group assignments. We will also attend live theatre and performance events

All terminology in this syllabus (such as Formalist Analysis and Concept Mapping) is drawn directly from the textbook, *Interpreting the Playscript* by Anne Fliotsos.

OBJECTIVES

- To acquire and apply play analysis vocabulary on the page and for the stage
- To interpret and analyze how a play offers possible meanings
- To compare and contrast script characteristics on the page and in production

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Fliotsos, Anne. *Interpreting the Playscript*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2011. (available at the bookstore)
- *The Longman Anthology of Drama and Theatre: A World Perspective* (available at the bookstore)
- Other plays assigned will be furnished to the students by the instructor.

REQUIRED PRODUCTIONS

- *Stop Kiss*, October 2 - October 12, Henry Heymann Theatre
- *Misterioso-119*, October 22 - October 26
- *Endgame*, October 29 - November 2
- *Avenue Q*, November 6 - November 23, Studio Theatre

PROJECTS

Visualizing the Play (5% of grade)

Find three images suitable for a production of an assigned play text. Justify the images and discuss how each encapsulates the play for you and your audience.

Playing a Scene (5% of grade)

Students will be given a short list of plays and assigned to work in pairs or small groups. Students will prepare a 2-3 minute section of the play to perform live in front of the class with all lines memorized. Emphasis will be placed on using knowledge of units, beats, space, and subtext to communicate the meaning of the scene rather than acting ability.

Research Project (10% of grade)

Students will be given a list of plays and directed to pick one play. Students will then create a portfolio consisting of reviews and images from recent productions of a play, as well as writing a short essay responding to a series of prompts assigned by the instructor.

Weekly Quizzes (10% of grade)

Most weeks there will be a short quiz or writing assignment based on the reading that is due.

Production Responses (15% of grade each)

Students will write two production reviews, utilizing the vocabularies and methodologies of the course. Student will read the script beforehand. Production and script will thus be put into conversation in each review. Instructor will provide specific prompts, directives and

due dates for reading, discussion and completion. Please note, these assignments will only be accepted as PDF files.

Script Analysis - Final Project (20% of grade)

Each student will choose a script that has not been assigned in class and begin to analyze and imagine the script for production. Components will include: an analysis of the play using either formalist or non-linear techniques (or a combination thereof) as covered in class; an act broken into units and beats; and a collage of visual imagery. Please note, this assignment will only be accepted as a PDF file.

GRADING

Visualizing the Play	50
Playing A Scene	50
Research Project	100
Quizzes	100
Production Response 1	150
Production Response 2	150
Script Analysis - Final Project	200
Preparation & Participation	200
Total Available Points	1000

GRADING SCALE

A+ = 970-1000	A = 900-969	B+ = 870-899	B = 800-869
C+ = 770-799	C = 700-769	D+ = 670-699	D = 600-669
F = 0-599			

CLASS PARTICIPATION (20% OF GRADE)

Students should be in class, on time, and prepared. Students will complete all reading and homework for the day assigned. To fulfill our course's learning objectives, students should be prepared to participate in the following ways:

- be on time: lateness will count against your participation points
- offer thoughtful responses and/or raise pertinent questions
- contribute to the discussion
- answer questions and/or offer comments when called upon
- listen thoughtfully and respectfully to your peers
- participate as productive members in group activities
- complete in-class exercises

ATTENDANCE

You will be allowed two absences without any penalty during the semester. Every other absence will lower your grade by 3%. Late arrivals will count against your participation grade (see “A word about Class Participation”). If you will be absent on a day when you are scheduled to present, it is your responsibility to contact your scene partner and switch your time with another pair. If you miss a second presentation date, your scene partner may be reassigned and you will lose all points for that assignment.

EXPECTATIONS

What you can expect from me . . .

- I will create a respectful and supportive classroom.
- I will be fair and transparent in my grading.
- I will do my best to help each of you succeed in this class.

What I expect from you . . .

- You will respect your peers and help create a supportive and safe classroom.
- You will focus on the work and will not use cell phones or other devices to text, surf the web, or otherwise take your focus away during class.
- You will do your best to succeed.

DIVERSITY CLAUSE

All participants of this class, both students and instructors, are required to help promote and maintain, at all times, a positive atmosphere in which everyone displays and receives respect, tolerance, and encouragement regardless of race, gender, religion, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic background.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. Plagiarism, copying of assignments, and cheating will not be tolerated. Violating the University-wide policy on academic honesty will result in automatic failure on the assignment and possible failure of the course. A copy of the university's policy statement is available at <http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html>.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, please notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TDD) to schedule your an appointment. The office is located in 216 William Pitt Union and the website is www.drs.pitt.edu. This information is confidential and the instructor may not discuss it in the class unless you choose to do so.

THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENT MEDIA STATEMENT

In accordance with "The Pitt Promise: A Commitment to Civility," The University of Pittsburgh Student Code of Conduct, and the professional standards and expectations of our field, students, staff and faculty in the Theatre Arts Department agree to the positive, responsible and respectful use of social media. The Theatre Arts Department's commitment to civility includes zero tolerance for public aspersion upon students, classes, facilities; the un-approved posting of production videos or photos, per Equity guidelines; cyber bullying.

Any member of the university community may file a complaint in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct and its procedures can be accessed here: <http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/studentconduct>. The Pitt Promise may be accessed here: <http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/pittpromise>.

THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENT CASTING STATEMENT & MAINSTAGE AND LAB SEASON MISSION

We are committed to producing stories from multiple cultural perspectives, of diverse styles and structures and from multiple time periods.

To tell every story upon our stage, students and artists of all abilities, races, genders, sexualities, nationalities, and religions are needed for our casts, our crew, and our production teams.

As a department, we are committed to analyzing and understanding a playwright's intentions for location, time and character. We are equally committed to challenging ourselves to think beyond the strictures of given circumstances and historical expectations in production.

We are committing to cultivating within our students and faculty a space for artists who are willing to take risks, to stretch themselves and to see each class, audition and production opportunity as a fresh opportunity for greatness.

COURSE CALENDAR*

Class Date	Assignment(s) Due & Planned Activities
Section 1: Emotional Responses	
August 26	Introductions; Syllabus; Overview of course
August 28	Fliotics: pg 1-32
September 2	<i>Reasons to Be Pretty</i> by Neil Labute Quiz 1
September 4	Beats / Units
September 9	<i>Mud</i> by Maria Irene Fornes Quiz 2
September 11	Visualizing the Play Project Due
Section 2: Formalist Tools	
September 16	Fliotics: pg 35-73 Quiz 3
September 18	<i>Oedipus Rex</i> by Sophocles
September 23	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> by Shakespeare Quiz 4
September 25	continue <i>Midsummer</i> discussion
September 30	<i>Stop Kiss</i> script Quiz 5
October 2	continue <i>Stop Kiss</i> discussion
October 7	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> by Lorraine Hansberry Quiz 6
October 9	continue <i>Raisin</i> discussion
October 14	NO CLASS
October 16	<i>Stop Kiss</i> Response Due discuss script v. production Research Project Due

Class Date	Assignment(s) Due & Planned Activities
Section 2: Breaking Rules	
October 21	<i>Misterioso-119</i> script Fliotics: pg 76-113 Quiz 7
October 23	continue Fliotics/ <i>Misterioso</i> discussion
October 28	<i>Endgame</i> script <i>Misterioso</i> discussion Quiz 8
October 30	continue <i>Endgame</i> discussion
November 4	<i>Ti-Jean and His Brothers</i> by Derek Walcott <i>Endgame</i> script v. production discussion Quiz 9
November 6	continue <i>Ti-Jean</i> discussion
November 11	Playing a Scene Project - Group 1
November 13	Playing a Scene Project - Group 2
November 18	<i>Dark Ride</i> by Len Jenkin Quiz 10
November 20	continue <i>Dark Ride</i>
November 25	<i>Avenue Q</i> script & discussion <i>Avenue Q</i> Response Due
November 27	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING
December 2	TBD
December 4	Final Class
December 12	Script Analysis Project Due

* The course calendar is subject to revision if necessary during the semester

SYLLABUS AGREEMENT FORM

I, _____, (print name) have read the syllabus and course timeline and understand the classroom policies, expectations, and rules as stated in the syllabus and timeline. By signing this form I agree to comply with the policies, requirements, expectations and consequences, accept the outline for this class, and acknowledge the instructor's right to adjust the timeline with due notice.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

Please return this page to the instructor by this semester's add/drop date.