Course description: Advanced critical analysis of selected plays from the modern era as blueprints for theatrical production. Course emphasis both in scripts examined and in critical methodologies will be on 20th century alternatives to Aristotelian structure.

Course overview: The course is designed to build on and to expand the work of THR 162: Play Analysis and Dramatic Literature. That course focuses on Aristotelian structural analysis, although it includes other types of texts and analytical systems. This course does not abandon Aristotle, but concentrates on 20th- (and 21st-) century alternatives in both scripts examined and methodologies employed. Special attention will be paid to the relationship between critical analysis and the work of actors, directors, designers, and dramaturgs.

Program learning outcomes:
Students who successfully complete this course will have achieved mastery of the following Program Learning Outcomes as identified by the School of Theatre:
- The student will be able to analyze a script in ways that are necessary to a theatre practitioner or scholar/critic. (All degree plans.)
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of theatre history and a variety of theatrical styles. (All degree plans.)
- The student will be able to form and articulate a critical analysis and evaluation of a work of theatre. (BA & BFA.)
- The student will demonstrate intermediate to advanced competence in one or more theatre specialization(s). (BFA)

Student Learning Outcomes:
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
- Analyze both Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian dramatic texts in terms of structure, style, and form.
- Articulate in some detail the dramatic theories of the principal Western theorists of the 20th century.
- Relate dramatic texts to the intellectual, social, religious, economic, and/or political environments in which they were created.
- Articulate the relationship between theory and practice for the leading theorist/practitioners of the 20th century.

Prerequisite: Junior standing. ENG 132 and THR 162 with grades of C or better, or permission of instructor.
Contacting me:
Office: 217 Fine Arts, ext. 1290 (department office is room 212, ext. 4003). Office hours: MW 1:30-3-00 and TR 9:30-10:30.

E-mail: My e-mail address is rjones@sfasu.edu. This is my preferred means of contact. I check e-mail at least three times a day. I do receive literally dozens of e-mail messages each day: please include the prefix “462” (e.g., “462: problems with paper”) in the subject line of all messages so I’ll recognize you immediately as a student in this class. I would also add that I plan to use D2L to send messages to the entire class from time to time. You can configure D2L to forward mail to the e-mail address of your choice; you are responsible for any communications sent through D2L.

Required texts:
Parks, Suzan-Lori. The America Play: And Other Works. TCG.
There is also a coursepack, Modern Dramatic Theory.

Other texts will no doubt be assigned. These materials may be online, on reserve, or distributed as handouts.

Class schedule:
Class meets on MWF from 9:00-9:50 a.m. Attendance and promptness are expected. See School Attendance Policy below.

N.B. A note on reading assignments. Listed below are the dates when a given text is due, not when it is assigned. In the case of plays, consider all prefaces, introductions, and epilogues, either by the playwright or by the editor, as part of the assignment.

W 1/23 Course introduction.
F 1/25 Read Fliotsos, Parts 1 & 2.

M 1/28 Read Fliotsos, Parts 3 & 4.
W 1/30 Read Schechner chapter in coursepack.
F 2/1 Read Meyerhold and Artaud sections in coursepack.
M 2/4 No class. Rick out of town.
W 2/6 Read Grotowski chapters in coursepack.
F 2/8 More Grotowski.

M 2/11 Read Brecht chapters in coursepack.
W 2/13 Caucasian Chalk Circle.
F 2/15 Caucasian Chalk Circle.

M 2/18 Read: “The Myth of Sisyphus.”
http://www.nyu.edu/classes/keefer/hell/camus.html
W 2/20 Lecture: From the absurd universe to the absurd theatre.
F 2/22 Waiting for Godot.

M 2/25 Waiting for Godot.
W 2/27 Waiting for Godot.
F 3/1 No class. Rick out of town.

M 3/4 Read Boal chapter in coursepack.
W 3/6 Read Fo chapter in coursepack.
F 3/8 Review.

M 3/11 Midterm Exam.
W 3/13 The Birthday Party.
F 3/15 The Birthday Party.

Spring Break.

M 3/25 Race and class. (Possible reading assignment, TBA.)
W 3/27 Fires in the Mirror.
F 3/29 Fires in the Mirror.

M 4/1 The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World.
W 4/3 Lecture: Feminist dramaturgy, etc.
F 4/5 Read Cixous section in coursepack.

W 4/10 Cloud 9.
F 4/12 Cloud 9.
M 4/15  Lecture: From modernism to postmodernism.
F 4/19  EASTER BREAK.

M 4/22  Read Foreman: “Foundations for a Theatre.”
W 4/24  Film Is Evil; Radio Is Good.
F 4/26  Film Is Evil; Radio Is Good.

M 4/29  Lecture: More on Deconstruction, Poststructuralism, etc.
W 5/1   Lecture: Still more on Deconstruction, Poststructuralism, etc.
F 5/3   Video: Brace Up.
         Paper due.

M 5/6   Video: Brace Up.
F 5/10  Review.

W 5/15  8:00 a.m.: Final exam.
         See note below under “Exams.”

Grading considerations:
Exams: There will be a midterm and a final exam, worth 1/9 and 2/9 of the final grade, respectively. The former will be in class on March 11. The latter may be administered as an on-site exam on May 15, or may be a take-home exam due at 10:00 a.m. on May 15. The determination will be made by class vote during the last week of classes.

Presentation/discussion facilitation/paper: Each student will be responsible for facilitating the discussion for one class period. As part of this project, the student will submit a five-page paper on D2L no later than 3:00 p.m. on the weekday before the presentation is scheduled. Papers to be discussed on Monday, therefore, are due on the previous Friday. All students are to have read the paper before class, and the discussion is intended to take the paper’s contents as “given” unless there are questions or comments. 1/6 of the final grade.

Paper: An 8-12 page paper outlining a production approach to a play similar to but other than plays read in this course. The only further stipulation is that this will be a new play to you: you must not have worked on it as a director, dramaturg, designer, stage manager (or the assistant to any of these positions), or actor; it may not have been assigned in any class you have taken at any level. What is permissible for one student, therefore, may be impermissible for another. We will talk more about the paper as the semester develops. What you need to know at the outset is that your
paper must be critical rather than historical and that while you are welcome, even expected, to call on your skills and interests in directing, design, etc., this is an academic essay rather than a practical overview per se. 1/3 of grade.

Class participation, etc.: A function of attendance, improvement, active engagement in the material, etc. 1/6 of the final grade.

Important note: The relative weight of grades listed above assumes passing grades in all areas. Grades will be lowered for students who do not pass all areas.

Miscellaneous but important notes:

Expectations:
This is an upper-level university level course, taken mostly (or perhaps exclusively) by majors. Expect to spend about three hours outside class for every hour in class.

Writing:
Part of the expectation of this course is that your writing level be appropriate to an upper-level course in the humanities. If you are not confident of your writing ability, make arrangements now to take advantage of the university’s various writing assistance programs. Start with the Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC) on the first floor of Steen Library.

Disabilities, religious observance, etc.:
Any student with a mental, physical, or emotional condition which might interfere with his/her performance in this course should both consult the Office of Disability Services and contact me immediately.
If your observance of a religious holiday will prevent you from attending class, please contact me immediately so we can make appropriate arrangements.
There will be no make-up exams given, or late work accepted without penalty, unless a medical excuse or some other official documentation is presented to the instructor.

Academic honesty:
The following are the responsibilities of students regarding upholding academic honesty, as described in the official policy of Stephen F. Austin State University.

“It is the responsibility of the student to abstain from cheating. Dishonesty of any kind with respect to examinations, written assignments, in or out of class, alteration of records, or illegal possession of current examinations or keys to examinations shall be considered cheating....

“Courtesy and honesty require that any ideas or materials borrowed from another must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of another as one’s own is plagiarism. The subject matter of ideas thus taken from another may range from a few sentences or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, or the writing of other
students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgement is also considered plagiarism. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas or materials taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.

“The School of Theatre expects students to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct. Misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own or knowingly allowing someone else to represent your work as his/hers constitutes academic dishonesty. Such behavior is antithetical to our work as scholars, as artists, and as members of a community founded on trust and mutual respect. It is an insult to faculty and an affront to honest students.

“Penalties for academic dishonesty may range from failure of a specific project to failure of the course, suspension from the production season for up to one year, and referral to university authorities for further action, which may include suspension or expulsion from the university.”

See the complete university policy at:
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

My policy: I am going to trust you not to cheat. That means I won’t be hovering over your shoulder during tests, etc., but it doesn’t mean I won’t be vigilant. It also means that if you do get caught cheating or plagiarizing, I will treat it as a violation of personal trust. You won’t like the result.

Bottom line: if innate honesty isn’t enough to keep you from plagiarizing, let my reputation as an enforcer fill you with dread.

A final statement: This class will inevitably touch on a host of issues that can make for awkward conversations about topics including but not limited to race, gender, class, and, inevitably, politics. Students are free, even encouraged, to express opinions which may not be shared by the majority, but discriminatory comments will not be tolerated, and in extreme cases may constitute disruptive behavior under the student code of conduct.