Stephen F. Austin State University

Play Analysis & Dramatic Literature

Fall 2021

DRAM 1362.003

Revised 21.08.24

Your Instructor: Prof. Scott Shattuck (he/him)
E-mail: shattucksh@sfasu.edu
Phone: 936.468-1336 (office), 917.860-6180 (mobile)
Office: McKibben Education Building 404-D
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10-11 am; Tuesday, Thursday 1:30-3 pm
Or by appointment (preferred). Office hours on Zoom except by appointment.

You may text or call me any time between 6 am and 10:30 pm especially if your message or question is time-sensitive. Otherwise, e-mails are usually preferred. Use the address above, not the D2L email system, or you may never receive my reply. Please be specific in the subject heading. Also, please specify in the body of your email what course (Play Analysis) and section (3 or TR 9:30) you are in. If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours, please email again or reach out to me in another way. If I need to contact you I will usually use your D2L email, so please be sure to forward those to an email you check frequently if necessary. Whether it’s sent to your SFA email or your D2L email, you are responsible for any message from me.

Whenever possible I will be on Zoom at or near the beginning of each office hour (a link will be posted on Brightspace), but to avoid disappointment it is always best to let me know you will be coming even if you are coming to a scheduled office hour. Since I will be conducting most office hours on Zoom, it is especially important to let me know in advance if you prefer to meet in three dimensions in the office. I am always open to meeting outside office hours at a mutually convenient time; the most efficient way to find one is to speak on the phone.

Class Meetings: McKibben Education Building 322
Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45 am
Important Dates to Note:

Last day to drop a course online is Tuesday, Sept. 7 (by 5 pm).

Our mid-term exam will be on Thursday, Oct. 14 at 9:30 am. The exam will be conducted on Brightspace, so you will need to bring a suitable device to the classroom or make special arrangements to take the exam remotely while also on Zoom (with camera on).

Last day to drop a course using a Drop Request Form is Monday, Nov. 29 (by 5 pm). May count toward six-drop limit.

Our final exam will be on Thursday, Dec. 9 at 8 am. The exam will be conducted on Brightspace, so you will need to bring a suitable device to the classroom or make special arrangements to take the exam remotely while also on Zoom (with camera on).

Required texts:


Please bring both textbooks with you to every class session so that we are able to reference them together in discussion.

Other readings will be provided on D2L Brightspace or as handouts, or potentially on reserve at Steen Library.

Course Description: Dramatic structure and literature for the theatre practitioner.
**Program Learning Outcomes (PLO’s) Supported in this Course:**

This course applies at an introductory level to the following Program Learning Outcomes as identified by the School of Theatre:

- A. The student will be able to analyze a script in ways that are necessary to a theatre practitioner or scholar/critic. (All degree programs.)
- B. The student will demonstrate an understanding of theatre history and a variety of theatrical styles. (All degree programs.)
- C. The student will be able to form and articulate a critical analysis and evaluation of a work of theatre. (BA, BA with Teacher Certification.)
- D. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the component areas of theatrical creation, process, production, performance, and study, and their interrelationships. (All degree programs.)
- E. The student will demonstrate intermediate to advanced competence in one or more theatrical specialization(s). (BA)

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- articulate and describe the defining attributes of various theatrical genres and styles as they were practiced in different historical eras. (PLOs A, B)
- critically analyze, evaluate and describe a dramatic work and its underlying structural elements. (PLOs A, C)
- read and analyze a play with an understanding of its various theatrical requirements (*i.e.*, setting, costumes, lighting, acting style, etc.). (PLOs A, D, E)
- demonstrate a richer basic knowledge of dramatic literature and be able to place a theatrical work in its historical context. (PLOs A, B)
- Analyze both a dramatic text and a performance text and note the correspondences and deviations between them. (PLOs A, C, D)
Course Requirements:

1. **Consistent, active, productive, collaborative participation.** To succeed in this course, you must be prepared (with the assigned reading completed, for example), alert and engaged, willing and able to participate in class exercises, cooperative, supportive, and respectful of your fellow students in every class session. The instructor’s assessment of your participation will form **20% of your final grade** for the course. Upon request, you will receive a mid-term assessment of your participation. Any pattern of tardiness or absenteeism may have a negative effect on your participation grade (as few as two absences or two times late for class may be considered a pattern).

2. **A written critique** (also called a “review”) describing and analyzing the play and production of one of the School of Theatre faculty-directed “Mainstage” productions of the semester (*Booty Candy* or *Ajax in Iraq*)* using concepts and vocabulary from this course. The critique should be about 500 words in length. In order to write it, you will purchase a ticket for and attend the production at least once (you may have to pay the student ticket price, or it may be possible to see it without charge if you volunteer to usher). If you have a cast, crew, or staff assignment on one or both of these productions your assignment will still be to describe and analyze play and production from the perspective of your role/job. If you miss both of these productions you will receive no credit (a score of 0, a grade of F) for this critique. The critique is due at the time of the next class session immediately following the closing performance. Your critique grade will form **10%** of your final course grade.

   *This semester, the student-directed full-length play *The Shadow Box* may be used to substitute for either of the mainstage productions for purposes of this assignment.*

2. **Group oral report.** The class will be divided into six groups of approximately three students each. Each group will be assigned to describe and advocate for a play assigned by the instructor. Each member of the group is required to read the play, collaborate on preparing the presentation, and speak as part of it. The class will be invited to ask questions about the play and members of the group should respond. Each pair of presentations will compete with one another and the rest of the class will vote on which play they would rather read, produce, or see (the results of the contests will not affect the grading). **5%** of final grade.

3. **Play experience journal.** Each required play (whether read or seen) will be documented with one or more online journal entries. Prompts and journal entries will be on D2L Brightspace. **10%** of final grade.

4. **Play analysis.** A written analysis of a play assigned by the instructor will be part of the summative evaluation of each student’s learning in the course. It will include an original thesis idea supported by analytical description of the plot, characters, subject and theme, diction, music, spectacle, and implied conventions in the play’s text. More details will be provided in class. **15%**.
5. **Quizzes.** Approximately one quarter and three quarters of the way through the semester there will be brief quizzes over the reading, vocabulary, and analytical techniques covered in class up to that point. Questions may also cover required attendance at theatre productions. The average of the scores on these two quizzes will form **10%** of the final grade.

6. **Mid-term and final exams.** Examinations at mid-term and semester’s end will be used to assess each student’s learning. Exams will include questions on readings, vocabulary, analytical techniques, and required plays seen. Exams will be taken on D2L Brightspace. Midterm **10%**, final exam **20%** of final grade.

**Course Calendar** (subject to change):

**Week 1:** Course overview; definition of theatre 8/23-27  
   Tuesday 8/24: No class  
   Thursday 8/26: Syllabus (read in advance!); definition of theatre

**Week 2:** Dramatic stories 8/30-9/3  
   Tuesday 8/31: Definition of drama & nature of action  
     Read Ball chapters 1 & 2  
   Thursday 9/2: The shape of a dramatic story  
     Read Ball chapters 3, 4, & 8  
     Read *Hamlet* intro & Act I

**Week 3:** Generating interest 9/6-10  
   Tuesday 9/7: Building suspense  
     Read Ball chapters 5, 6, & 9  
     Read *Hamlet* Acts II, III, and IV  
   Thursday 9/9: Excitement & relief  
     Read Ball chapters 7, 17, & 19  
     Read *Hamlet* Act V

**Week 4:** Dramatic form 9/13-17  
   **Tuesday 9/14:** QUIZ; definition of form  
     Read intro & *Oedipus the King* (pp 93-116)  
   Thursday 9/16: The seasonal cycle of genres  
     Read *Oedipus* (pp 116-134)

**Week 5:** Formal characteristics 9/20-24  
   Tuesday 9/21: Plot structure and the unities  
     Read “perspective” by Aristotle & links from D2L  
   Thursday 9/23: Other elements and Aristotelean principles  
   *The Shadow Box* 9/24 7:30 pm, 9/25 2:00 and 7:30 pm – BPSC Regents Suite A

**Week 6:** Seeing, thinking about, discussing, and writing about theatre 9/27-10/1  
   Tuesday 9/28: Going to the theatre and writing a critique or review  
   Thursday 9/30: Practice writing exercise
Week 7: Style, realism, and character 10/4-8
   Tuesday 10/5: Representation styles
      Read intro & *A Doll’s House* Act I
   Thursday 10/7: Character functions & qualities
      Read *A Doll’s House* Act II
      Read Ball chapter 10 & 15

Week 8: Thought & Mid-term exam 10/11-15
   Bootycandy 10/12-16, 7:30 pm – Kennedy Auditorium
   Tuesday 10/12: Thought
      Read *A Doll’s House* Act III
      Read Ball chapters 12 & 13
   Thursday 10/14: Mid-term exam on D2L Brightspace

Week 9: The other elements & alternative styles 10/18-22
   Tuesday 10/19: Diction, music, and spectacle
      DUE: Critique of Bootycandy
      Read Ball chapters 11, 14, 16, & 18
      Read intro & *Waiting for Godot* Act I
   Thursday 10/21: Presentational styles
      Read *Waiting for Godot* Act II & “perspective” by Esslin
   “The Actor’s Nightmare,” 10/22 7:30 pm, 10/23 2:00 and 7:30 pm – Regents Suite A

Week 10: Making the case for other plays 10/25-29
   Tuesday 10/26: Groups 1 & 2 present; discuss *Godot*
      Read intro & *A Raisin in the Sun* Act I
   Thursday 10/28: Groups 3 & 4, 5 & 6 present
      Read *A Raisin in the Sun* Act II
   “Overtones,” 10/29 7:30 pm, 10/30 2:00 and 7:30 pm – Regents Suite A

Week 11: Convention; diverse American drama 11/1-5
   Tuesday 11/2: Convention in genres and styles; discuss *Raisin*
      Read *A Raisin in the Sun* Act III
   Thursday 11/4: QUIZ; analyzing *Raisin*
      Read intro & *Death and the King’s Horseman* Act I

Week 12: Structural subdivisions 11/8-12
   Ajax in Iraq 11/9-13, 7:30 pm – Community House, 425 San Augustine St., Center, TX
   Tuesday 11/9: Acts, scenes, French scenes, and units
      Read *Death and the King’s Horseman* Act II
   Thursday 11/11: Dividing a scene into units
      Read *Death and the King’s Horseman* Act III

Week 13: International drama 11/15-19
   Tuesday 11/16: African drama
      DUE: Critique of Ajax in Iraq
      Read *Death and the King’s Horseman* Acts IV & V
   Thursday 11/18: Analyze & discuss Horseman

Virtual Week: Asian theatre traditions on D2L Brightspace
   Read intro, Atsumori & “perspective” by Zeami
   Additional instructional materials on Brightspace

Thanksgiving Week (no classes) 11/22-26
Week 14: Wrap-Up and Review 11/29-12/3
   Tuesday 11/30: Catch-up and concluding discussion
   Read Ball chapters 14, 21, & 22
   Thursday 12/2: Review for final
   **DUE:** Play Analysis paper

Week 15: Final exam
   Thursday, 12/9, **8 am:** FINAL EXAM on Brightspace

**Due Dates** (subject to change):

*Assignments due at class time*
- Play Experience Journal *before most class sessions*
- Production Critique *October 19 or November 16*
- Group Presentations *October 26 and 28*
- Play Analysis *December 2*

Extensions for good cause will be considered on a case by case basis. They must be requested well in advance (generally at least 48 hours except in case of emergency, sudden illness, etc.). Requests must be made by email from the student’s official SFA email address with the word “extension” in the subject field.

**Grading:**

The letter grade on each assignment is translated to this numerical scale:

- A+ 100
- A  95
- A-  91
- B+  88
- B   85
- B-  81
- C+  78
- C   75
- C-  71
- D+  68
- D   65
- D-  61
- F   0
The final grade is then calculated using the percentages in the “Requirements” section above, and the numerical weighted average is translated to this letter-grade scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89.500-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.500-89.499</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.500-79.499</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.500-69.499</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-59.499</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Attendance Policy:**

In keeping with the School of Theatre policy (see *School of Theatre Handbook*), the following applies to this course:

“A career in the fine arts demands dedication and discipline; preparation for this career requires conscientious development of effective work habits. To this end, regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories and other activities for which a student is registered or assigned.

“I. It is University policy to excuse students from class attendance for certain reasons related to health, family emergencies, student working the Performing Arts Series, and other situations of similar importance.

“Excused absences from Theatre classes will only be granted upon presentation of written documentation upon the first day of the student’s return from the teacher, sponsor or physician involved. In the case of absences caused by University-sponsored events, inclusion in the University’s public listing of such absences will constitute an official excuse. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor that he/she has scheduled the planned official absence.

“II. **A total of...7 excused and/or unexcused absences in Tuesday-Thursday classes will result in the student receiving a failing grade.** Excessive unexcused absences will affect your grade. [More than three unexcused absences are considered excessive in this course. Each student is responsible for keeping track of their own attendance; do not rely on the professor for an attendance warning!]

“III. **The student will be allowed a maximum of...two unexcused absences in Tuesday-Thursday classes.**

“IV. In the case of missed classes, the student will be held responsible for the successful completion of assigned work and/or projects.”

Also, in this course if you arrive late for or leave early from any class session it will be considered the equivalent of at least 1/3 of one absence. The same rules apply for excused and unexcused absence from a part of a class session (arriving late or leaving early) as apply to absences from the entire session.
Attendance is recorded on Brightspace and each student is responsible for monitoring their own attendance. Any error in the instructor’s attendance records must be pointed out no later than the next class session.

Requests to excuse an absence must be presented, along with the required documentation, by email to shattucksh@sfasu.edu from the student’s official SFA email account with the word “absence” in the subject heading.

**Academic Integrity:**

SFA Statement:

“Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

In keeping with the School of Theatre policy (see the *Handbook*), the following applies:

“...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 [NB. “another” includes any Internet resource]. Offering the work of another [including an anonymous or group Internet author] 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 [or web sites]. 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’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.”

It is the student’s responsibility to know the definition of plagiarism and to avoid unintentional as well as intentional plagiarism. In this course, unintentional plagiarism will be treated no differently from intentional cheating. All of your work must be your own original work (unless appropriately cited). In recent years professional directors have successfully asserted legal ownership of staging. In other words, it is possible to plagiarize another director’s concept, blocking or other ideas. This too is a form of cheating and carries all of the consequences described above.

Withheld Grades:

SFA Statement: “Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.”
Acceptable Student Behavior:

According to the *General Bulletin*, “A student enrolling in the university assumes an obligation to conduct himself/herself in a manner compatible with the university’s function as an educational institution.” In this course, you must uphold the highest standards of respect for the teaching and learning process. Any behavior that distracts from our educational or artistic work, or would cause a reasonable person working as instructor or student in this setting to feel uncomfortable or distracted, will not be tolerated. This includes whispering or talking out of turn or making other distracting sounds at any level of volume, no matter how low, or making irrelevant or inappropriate gestures or signs of any kind, no matter how small. If you engage in such behavior, you will receive one warning from the instructor. If the same behavior or any other disruptive behavior occurs after a warning, you will be required to leave the class immediately, counted absent (unexcused) from the class, and held responsible for assigned work and/or projects due or assigned in the class. You will have to satisfy the instructor that you intend to behave appropriately for the rest of the semester before returning for the next class meeting. Any disruptive behavior after one ejection will result in a failing grade for the course; you will not be permitted to return for the rest of the semester. Serious conduct violations will also be referred to university authorities for further action.

SFA Statement: “Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.”
Late Work:

When an assignment’s scheduling affects other students (scenes with student actors and/or student audiences, for example) it is never accepted late if the change of schedule might inconvenience or affect the work of others. Written work that must be completed in sequence to build for success on a complex project is never accepted late. Individual written assignments such as critiques may be accepted late at the instructor’s discretion, but the grade on the assignment will always be affected negatively (the later it is, the larger the penalty), and the instructor will always make it his top priority to be fair to students that submitted their work in on time.

Guidelines for Written Work:

Except where otherwise instructed, whenever it is reasonable to expect it, written work such as critiques, play analyses and casting breakdowns should be word-processed using Microsoft Word or Apple Pages software and submitted in the appropriate Dropbox of the course management system. It should be printed in black ink on regular white copier/printer paper in a widely-used, highly readable font such as Times New Roman, no less than 10 nor more than 12-point size, with margins of approximately one inch. In other words, it should look much like this document except that it should be double-spaced. It should have your name word-processed on the front page (no title page is necessary). (For more details on standards for college papers in the arts and humanities, consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.*) Unless otherwise specified, due dates refer to the scheduled class start time.

Students with Disabilities:

SFA Statement:

“To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).”

If you need a reasonable accommodation that has been approved by ODS, it will be happily provided, but it is your responsibility to speak to me directly and to remind me (well in advance) as often as necessary about your needs.
Please Note:

This syllabus is a plan for the course, and every effort will be made to follow the plan. However, the year 2020 taught even the most confident and flexible among us that circumstances can cause plans to change. If and when adjustments become necessary, priorities will be to seek alternative ways to meet our learning goals, and to ensure that every student is treated fairly with no student unduly penalized by external circumstances which affect us all.

To attend ticketed theatre productions, you should get your ticket well in advance to avoid missing a show due to a sell-out (which is especially but not exclusively a concern at closing performances). The Box Office is located in the lobby of Kennedy Auditorium. Using a credit card, you may also order tickets on the phone at (936) 468-6407. The Box Office strives to be open from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday and from 45 minutes before each performance, but is sometimes required to close because staff is not available. If your call is answered by voicemail, you should leave a clear message including your phone number (spoken slowly) and you will get a call back. A credit card may also be used at boxoffice.sfasu.edu, but this is not recommended because there is an exorbitant service charge on each ticket.