Stephen F. Austin State University

Play Analysis & Dramatic Literature

Fall 2023

Course Description: Dramatic structure and literature for the theatre practitioner.

Instructor: Prof. Scott Shattuck (he/him)
E-mail: shattucksh@sfasu.edu
Phone: 936.468-1336 (office), 917.860-6180 (mobile)
Office: Griffith Fine Arts Building Rm. 225
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1-2 pm; Tuesday, Thursday 2-3 pm
or by appointment (preferred). Office hours end on December 1. Meetings by Zoom, FaceTime, or phone may be arranged upon request.

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. If you prefer to meet on Zoom or FaceTime, or on the phone, that can usually be arranged, so please just let me know. 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.

You may text or call me any time between 8:00 am and 8:00 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 (MWF) 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. Whether it’s sent to your SFA email or your D2L email, you are responsible for any message I send.

Class Meetings: Griffith Fine Arts Bldg. Rm. 310
Tuesdays & Thursdays 11 am-12:15 pm
Course Contact and Study Hours

This is a three semester-credit-hour course, so there will be three hours of in-class instruction per week, and each student should spend an average of six additional hours of reading, viewing/listening, writing, reviewing, and other learning time outside of class every week.

Important Dates to Note:

Last day to drop a full-semester class using a Drop Request Form and remain enrolled in other fall classes is October 6.

Our mid-term exam will be on Tuesday, October 17 at 11 am. The exam will be conducted on Brightspace, so you will need to bring a suitable device to the classroom or make special arrangements in advance to take the exam remotely while also on Zoom (with camera on).

Last day to submit a drop request form if you are dropping a full-semester class and will remain enrolled in other classes this semester is December 5. Courses dropped using the request form may count toward your six-drop limit (Also the last day to submit a withdrawal form if you intend to withdraw from all eligible classes and receive a W grade for full-semester courses.)

Our final exam will be on Tuesday, December 12 at 10:30 am. The exam will be conducted on Brightspace, so you will need to bring a suitable device to the classroom or make special arrangements in advance to take the exam remotely while also on Zoom (with camera on).

Required texts:

David Ball, Backwards & Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays.


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

Lin-Manuel Miranda & Quiara Alegría Hudes, In the Heights.

Other instructional materials may be provided on D2L Brightspace or as handouts, or perhaps on reserve at Steen Library.
Course Calendar (subject to change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No class</th>
<th>T 8/29</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1: Introduction to the course; definition &amp; purposes of theatre</td>
<td>R 8/31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read pp. 1-3 in the “Introduction” to the Norton Anthology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2: Definition of Drama; the nature of dramatic action</td>
<td>T 9/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Ball chapters 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read intro to Hamlet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 3: The Shape of a dramatic story</td>
<td>R 9/7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Ball chapters 3, 4 &amp; 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Hamlet Act I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 4: Obstacle &amp; conflict; building suspense</td>
<td>T 9/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Ball chapter 5, 6 &amp; 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Hamlet Act II &amp; III</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 5: Excitement &amp; relief</td>
<td>R 9/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Ball chapters 7, 17, &amp; 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Hamlet Act IV &amp; V</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 6: Definition of form; the seasonal cycle of genres</td>
<td>T 9/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read intro to Oedipus the King &amp; Oedipus (pp 93-122)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 7: QUIZ; Tertiary genres</td>
<td>R 9/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Oedipus (pp 122-134)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 8: Plot structure &amp; the unities according to the Poetics</td>
<td>T9/26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read “Critical Perspective” by Aristotle (pp 135-143)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 9: Other elements &amp; Aristotelean principles</td>
<td>R 9/28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read “Critical Perspective” by Aristotle (pp 143-150)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Piano Lesson Thu.-Sat. 9/28-30, 7:30 pm &amp; Sat.-Sun 9/30-10/1, 2 pm</td>
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<td>Flex Theatre, Griffith Fine Arts Building</td>
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<td>Session 10: The nature of styles; representational styles</td>
<td>T 10/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read intro to A Doll House &amp; Doll House Act I</td>
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<td>Session 11: Character functions &amp; traits</td>
<td>R 10/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Ball chapter 10 &amp; 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read A Doll House Act II</td>
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<td>“A Cheever Evening” Fri.-Sat. 10/6-7, 7:30 pm &amp; Sat. 10/7, 2 pm</td>
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<td>Black Box Theatre, Griffith Fine Arts Building</td>
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<td>Session 12: Thought</td>
<td>T 10/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Ball chapters 12 &amp; 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read A Doll House Act III</td>
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<td>Session 13: “Trifles;” review for mid-term</td>
<td>R 10/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read intro to “Trifles” and “Trifles”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 14: Mid-term exam on D2L Brightspace</td>
<td>T 10/17</td>
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<td>Session 15: Presentational styles; diction</td>
<td>R 10/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Ball chapters 11 &amp; 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read intro to <em>Waiting for Godot</em> and <em>Godot</em> Act I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 16: Music &amp; spectacle; discuss <em>Godot</em></td>
<td>T 10/24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Ball chapters 16 &amp; 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read <em>Waiting for Godot</em> Act II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read “Perspective” by Esslin</td>
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<td>Session 17: <strong>Groups presentations</strong></td>
<td>R 10/26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read Intro to <em>A Raisin in the Sun</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 18: Diverse American theatre</td>
<td>T 10/31*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read <em>Raisin</em> Act I &amp; II</td>
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### Additional Information

For **Moon Over Buffalo**
- Fri.-Sat. 10/27-28, 7:30 pm & Sat. 10/28, 2 pm
- Black Box Theatre, Griffith Fine Arts Building

For **Once Upon a Mattress**
- Thu.-Sat. 11/2-4, 7:30 & Sat.-Sun. 11/5-6, 2 pm
- Flex Theatre, Griffith Fine Arts Building

**Thanksgiving Break** 11/18-26

**Session 24: Asian Theatre Traditions**
- Watch Crash Course Theater videos as assigned
- T 11/28

**Session 25: Noh & Kyogen; discuss *Atsumori***
- Read intro to *Atsumori* & *Atsumori*
- R 11/30

**Session 26: Diverse American Musical Theatre**
- Read background article online and *In the Heights* Act I
- T 12/5
  - **DUE:** Play Analysis Paper

**Session 27: Discuss & analyze *In the Heights*; review for final exam**
- Read Ball chapters 21 & 22
- R 12/7
  - Read *In the Heights* Act II

**10:30 am: Final Exam** in classroom on Brightspace
- T 12/12
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 discussion and exercises, cooperative, supportive, and respectful of your fellow students in every class session. Talking (even whispering) to a classmate during lectures, discussions, video presentations, etc. is distracting and will result in a lower participation grade. The instructor’s assessment of your participation will form **25% of your final grade** for the course. Upon request, you may 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. Group oral presentation. 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 substantively. Each pair or trio 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 substantially 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. Each entry should demonstrate the student’s command of the reading material and related concepts from the course. The plays produced in the School of Theatre’s Mainstage Series this semester (*The Piano Lesson* and *Once Upon a Mattress*) may call for double entries which will thus be weighted more heavily in the grading than other 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 and an 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 25% of final grade.**
Due Dates (subject to change):

Assignments due at the beginning of class time
Play Experience Journal before most class sessions
Group Presentations October 25 & 27
Play Analysis Paper December 6

Extensions or alternative assignments for good cause will be considered on a case-by-case basis. They must be requested well in advance (generally at least 72 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(s) “extension” or “alternative assignment” in the subject field.

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 in the lobby of the Griffith Fine Arts Building. 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 a service charge on each ticket.
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:

- 89.500-100  A
- 79.500-89.499  B
- 69.500-79.499  C
- 59.500-69.499  D
- 0-59.499  F

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 two 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. In-person attendance is required. In the rare instance when you cannot attend in person but could benefit from attending the class on Zoom, you may contact the instructor well in advance and, at his sole discretion, you may or may not be afforded this opportunity, but Zoom attendance will be considered the equivalent of at least ¼ of one absence and may also have a negative effect on the participation grade.

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:

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that...
has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.”

In keeping with the School of Theatre rules (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, including generative artificial intelligence (AI) sources such as ChatGPT]. Offering the work of another [including an anonymous or group or AI 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 or AI platforms]. 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 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.”

Policy on Late Work:

When an assignment’s scheduling affects other students (group presentations, 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 Microsoft Word software and submitted in that form or as a PDF in the appropriate Dropbox of the course management system. The text should be in black on a white background, using a 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/.”

If you need a reasonable accommodation 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.

Student Wellness and Well-Being:

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:

The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
936.468.1041

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
• Counseling Services
• Student Outreach and Support
• Food Pantry
• Wellness Coaching
• Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:
• Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
• National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
• Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
• johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

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)

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 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.