

DRAMATIC THEORY & CRITICISM

Spring 2014

THEA 4363.01 CRN 22281 MWF 12:00-12:50 pm

THEA 4363.02 CRN 22282 MWF 2:00-2:50 pm

PAC 240 (Performing Arts Center)

David McTier, Ph.D.

(936) 294-4063

dam005@shsu.edu

Office: PAC 284-F

Sign-up for Appointments on Office Door

Catalogue Description

A study of the principles of various styles and periods of dramaturgy, involving a history of criticism from Aristotle to the present. Representative plays will be analyzed for theme, structure, characterization and dialogue with a view to their influences on contemporary theatre. Emphasis is placed on written student criticism and evaluation of plays.

Writing Enhanced. Credit 3.

Course Description

This is a lecture–discussion course on dramatic theory and criticism. While we will read and discuss numerous play excerpts, our primary focus is not script analysis but, rather, *theory* (why theatre is the way it is—its conventions of writing and production) and *criticism* (how we perceive, understand, and judge theatre). Our study of criticism will be based on the critical perspectives surveyed in Lois Tyson’s book, *Critical Theory Today*. On Mondays, we will explore many different forms of criticism. On Wednesdays, we will focus on theoretical issues, particularly those most relevant to current theatre practice. We will spend most of our Fridays focusing on traditional (formalist/ intrinsic) script analysis.

Course Objectives

- To understand how and why current conventions of writing and production exist.
- To understand a variety of critical perspectives and apply them in analyzing and evaluating scripts and productions.
- To understand and appreciate how subjective the perception and evaluation of theatre/art is and how these subjective differences, be they individual or cultural, past or present, enrich our art and allow it to evolve continuously.
- To understand current theoretical and practical issues facing American theatre.

Textbook (Optional)

Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User–Friendly Guide*, 2nd Edition. The first edition also is acceptable.

Graded Components

5 individual projects, each worth 20% of your final course grade. (See attached “Projects Overview” page.)

- Project #1: due Friday, January 31, beginning of class
- Project #2: due Friday, February 21, beginning of class
- Project #3: due Friday, March 21, beginning of class
- Project #4: due Friday, April 11, beginning of class
- Project #5: due Monday, May 5, at 5:00 p.m. (for both classes)

Attendance

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

After 3 absences, you will be penalized -3 points from your final course grade for each excess absence, unless there is written intervention from the Office of the Dean of Students (located in the LSC).

For each day of class that you arrive on time, you will be rewarded with 1/13th of a point (a "tasty treat") to be added to your final course grade.

Late Work

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

Final Exam

There is no final exam; however, your final project (for both classes) is due on that final exam day (Monday, May 5, at 5:00 p.m.).

Classroom Conduct

Food and candy are not permitted in the classroom. Beverages are permitted, if they are in spill-proof containers. Laptops are not permitted. Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off and stored out of sight. You may audio record class; however, you may not use an electronic device to take notes.

Academic Dishonesty

Any incident of academic dishonesty, most notably submitting someone else's work with your name on it, will result in a grade of zero for the project as well as a report to the department chair. Any subsequent incident will result in automatic course failure and a report to the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and the Dean of Students.

Some of your writing assignments will be accepted only through TurnItIn on Blackboard.

Final Course Grade

90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 0-59 = F

Students with Disabilities

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, you should register with the SHSU Counseling Center and then talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. Please note that no accommodation will be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

PROJECTS OVERVIEW (TENTATIVE)

Project #1: Materials (Genres)

What is being produced in professional theatre now?

Categories: 1) Broadway, 2) Off-Broadway, 3) Regional/LORT, 4) Regional/Non-Lort, 5) Tours or Summer

You may do your research by yourself or with a partner and (together) create a composite list/chart. Then submit a 1000-word essay written in your own words that summarizes your findings.

Format: Composite List (25%) plus TurnItIn Paper (75%). Due and share in class on Friday, January 31.

Project #2: Methods (New To Me)

What recent productions, conventions, technologies, and/or philosophies are being produced, used or developed that seem new, innovative, different, unconventional, etc.?

You will create a Prezi, Powerpoint, or blog that presents images and information covering at least five (5) different phenomenon. Original writing should be appr. 500 words total.

Format: Digital presentation: visuals and formatting (50%) and descriptive writing (50%). Due and share in class on Friday, February 21.

Project #3: My Future (After Sam)

What are my options and opportunities after graduating?

You will build a (new) website or blog with pages (or posts) covering the following: 1) professional theatre, 2) grad school or additional training, 3) teacher certification.

Format: Online website or blog. Formatting (25%) and content/writing (75%). Due and share in class on Friday, March 21.

Project #4: Issues

What current issues are having the most effect on theatre and its future?

Topics: 1) non-traditional casting, 2) funding, 3) education and training, 4) unions, 5) competition with other media.

Format: TBA but probably another digital presentation: visuals and formatting (50%) and descriptive writing (50%). Due and share in class on Friday, April 11.

Project #5: Review

Use everything you've learned this semester to write a theatre review of Hair.

Your 800-1000 review should follow the guidelines established by *Theatre Journal*.

Format: TurnItIn Paper (100%). Due on Monday, May 5, at 5:00 p.m. There is no final exam nor final meeting during exams week.

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
JANUARY	12 Auditions Begin	13	14	15 Classes Begin Syllabus	16	17 <i>USITT</i> SW Aesthetics	18	
	19	20 MLK Day	21	22 Conventions	23	24 Text Analysis #1	25	
	26	27 Criticism #1	28	29 Theory #1	30 <i>TETA</i>	31 <i>TETA</i> PROJECT #1	1 <i>TETA</i>	
FEBRUARY	2	3 Criticism #2	4	5 Theory #2	6	7 Lab or Library	8	
	9	10 Criticism #3	11	12 Theory #3	13	14 Text Analysis #2	15	
	16	17 Criticism #4	18	19 <i>Much Ado</i> Theory #4	20	21 PROJECT #2	22	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	1	
	KCACTF							
	2	3 Criticism #5	4	5 Theory #5	6	7 Text Analysis #3	8	
MARCH	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	SPRING BREAK							
	16	17 SPECIAL: GUEST	18	19 <i>Lucy</i> SPECIAL: DAVID	20	21 PROJECT #3	22	
	23	24 Criticism #6	25	26 <i>USITT</i> Theory #6	27 <i>USITT</i>	28 <i>USITT</i> Lab or Library	29 <i>USITT</i>	
	30	31 Criticism #7	1 <i>Rep Shows</i>	2 Theory #7	3	4 Text Analysis #4	5	
APRIL	6	7 Criticism #8	8	9 Theory #8	10	11 PROJECT #4	12 <i>Experimental</i>	
	13	14 Criticism #9	15	16 Theory #9	17	18 Good Friday	19	
	20 Easter	21 Criticism #10	22	23 <i>Hair</i> Theory #10	24	25 Text Analysis #5	26	
	27	28 TBA	29	30 TBA	1	2 Classes End	3	
	MAY	4	5 <i>Final Exam</i> PROJECT #5	6	7	8	9	10 Commencement