

David McTier

THEA 2367.01
CRN 81091
Classroom: AB1 Room 209

Text Analysis for Theatre

THEA 2367
Fall 2015
MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m.

Tom Prior

THEA 2367.02
CRN 81092
Classroom: CJ A205

COURSE SYLLABUS

This syllabus, supplemental information, announcements and grades can be found on the blackboard website: <http://blackboard.shsu.edu>. Please check it frequently!

Catalog Description

This course examines the methodology for analyzing dramatic masterworks primarily as tools for the theatre craftsman and emphasizes the importance of this practical skill for actors, directors, designers and playwrights. While focusing on the dramatic structure of a script in various plays, this course will concurrently examine the playwright's social and cultural milieu. Credit 3. Prerequisite: THEA 1364.

Course Description

This course is being team taught by David McTier and Thomas Prior.

(McTier) During our lecture/discussions this semester, we will explore dramatic theory as it affects playwriting and analysis. We also will consider how different critical lenses affect our perception, understanding, and evaluation of the scripts being discussed with Prof. Prior. We will explore topics (and possible careers!) related to text analysis, including playwriting and screenwriting, dramaturgy and journalistic criticism. Our discoveries together will be applied in three hands-on projects that utilize both hard copy and online resources.

(Prior) This course examines the practical skill of analyzing scripts for actors, directors, designers, playwrights and teachers. Through investigating various dramatic texts and treating them primarily as tools for the theatre craftsman and *not as a study of literature*, we will examine the dramatic structure of a script while concurrently examining the social and cultural events of the playwright's world. Using David Ball's book *Backwards and Forwards* each play will be examined with the objective of presenting the work to a live theatre audience.

Course Objectives: McTier

- To understand key dramatic theories that have defined and challenged our understanding of dramatic texts and genres.
- To understand how people may have profoundly different interpretations of and critical responses to a text based on their own personal and cultural contexts.
- To be able to locate and use hard copy and online resources that will enrich class studies and research for production.
- To understand the role and value of written criticism to the life and development of theatre production.
- To understand how text analysis can prepare other performance-related paths and careers.

Course Objectives: Prior

- To find the tools necessary for thorough script analysis over a wide range of dramatic styles and genres
- To gain a basic understanding of scripts through analyzing them as a map for the theatre practitioner
- To learn the tools of discovering character through textual building blocks
- To construct a personalized regimen for each student in preparation for the rehearsal process
- To make the analysis of plays less sacrosanct and academic and more as a practical tool for making informed creative choices to utilize in performance.

Required Texts

You are responsible for reading one textbook and five plays. Note: Our Newton Grisham Library has copies of all of these plays.

- David Ball's *Backwards and Forwards*
- Sophocles' *Antigone*
- William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
- August Wilson's *Fences*
- Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*
- Eugene Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* (not tested)

Course Requirements

- 20% quizzes on the four required plays (Prior); each quiz is worth 5% of course grade
- 10% test on David Ball's *Backwards and Forwards* (Prior); the test is worth 10% of course grade
- 30% three projects (McTier); each project is worth 10% of course grade
- 20% final comprehensive exam; McTier's half of exam counts 10% of course grade; Prior's half of exam counts 10% of course grade
- 10% attending all fall department productions (*Rocky Horror*, *Lonesome West*, *Dogface*, *This is Our Youth*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*) 2% points on final grade for each production attended; if unable to attend because of conflicts, you may attend a Houston production at instructor's discretion
- 10% class participation (half from McTier; half from Prior); 5% from each professor

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 (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 & Makeup Work

You may make up a test or submit a project late only if you have legitimate and documented reason approved by the Dean of Students Office, e.g., university obligation, hospitalization, court appearance, jury duty, funeral. The Office of the Dean of Students is located in the Lohman Student Center; just take your document(s) to that office, which, in turn, will notify all of your professors by e-mail. Any project submitted late will be penalized one letter grade (-10 points) for each week overdue.

Classroom Conduct

Food and candy are not permitted in the classroom. Beverages are permitted as long as they are in spill-proof containers. Unless otherwise noted, laptops and tablets are not permitted. Please turn off cell phones and refrain from texting during class.

Final Exam

Your final exam is scheduled for Monday, December 7, from 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Location TBA.

Office Meetings

If you have questions or concerns related to this class, you are encouraged to meet with either or both professors in their offices. A brief question before or after class is fine; however, anything substantial should be addressed at another time, when the professor is not setting up or striking class. Please realize that we have personal and professional lives beyond SHSU and are not available 24/7. Please allow 24 hours response time for email and voice mail.

David McTier
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Office Hours: Sign up on Office Door
(936) 294-4063
Email: dam005@shsu.edu

Tom Prior
Office: UTC 126
Office Hours: By Appointment
(936) 294-1328
Email: tomprior@shsu.edu

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 Fine Arts and Communication and the Dean of Students.

Plagiarism is not a matter of opinion. If you copy and paste without citing or even paraphrase, then you have plagiarized. If you do so, you will receive a zero (0) for the assignment and be reported to our department chair.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy

A student desiring to miss a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) should present a written statement concerning the religious holiday to me at least 2 weeks before the absence. I will then notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments are to be completed.

Students with Disabilities Policy

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

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, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>