

THEATER 120

Play Analysis
 Fall 2013
 T/TH 10-11:15
 Bartlett 3

Christopher Baker

Assistant Professor
 crbake1@gmail.com
 413.575.0363
 Office Hours: T/TH 11:30-12:00

TAs: **Paul Adolphsen**
 padolphsen@earthlink.net
Amy Brooks
 abbrooks@theater.umass.edu

DESCRIPTION

This course has three goals:

1. To analyze plays **for production** through the intensive study of representative plays.
2. To place those plays within an historical context through a survey of (mostly western) theater—its methods, literature and relationship to society.
3. To communicate analysis in writing.

Our focus will be on the dramatic text and the theatrical event. There will be readings, lectures, class discussions, videos and required attendance at productions.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. *Understanding Plays*. Milly S. Barranger. 3rd Ed. Available at the Textbook Annex or internet sellers.
2. *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* by Young Jean Lee is available in an e-book from the UMass Library: Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven and Other Plays [electronic resource]/ Young Jean Lee. UM ebrary / E-Book / PS3612.E228 S66 2009eb
3. Readings on Moodle.
4. Departmental productions. You must see the following departmental productions. You will be asked to write about them. Get your tickets as early as you can from the box office in the Fine Arts Center:
 - The Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare)
 Rand Theater
 Oct 23, 29 at 7:30PM and Oct 25 at 2PM. (Note: Though the production plays after Oct. 29, you need to see it by that date to write about it in Quiz #1)
 - A New Brain* (Finn and Lapine)
 Curtain Theater
 Nov. 15,18,19,20,21 and 22 at 7:30PM and Nov. 22 at 2PM

GRADES

Your grade will be based on 1000 points and will consist of the following elements:

Attendance	120 points
Quiz 1	175
Quiz 2	175
10 Assignments	

1. Fences (1 page)	30	6. Laramie (1)	40
2. Oedipus (1)	35	7. Galileo (3)	90
3. Hamlet (2)	65	8. Footfalls (2)	70
4. Hedda (3)	90	9. Songs of	
5. How I Learned		Dragons (1)	35
To Drive (1)	40	10. Secaucus (1)	35

Papers that are late will have 10% of the total points possible deducted for each day. Please note that failing to turn in a paper results in no points, which is different than the grade of an F, which may have points associated with it. **So turn in your paper, even if it is late.**

GRADING SCALE

A	930	B+	870	C+	770	D+	670
A-	900	B	830	C	730	D	630
		B-	800	C-	700	D-	600

READING

Make sure you read the plays by the due dates indicated on the schedule. There are 11 plays to be read for this class. Plays are pretty short, however (except *Hamlet*) and can be read pretty quickly (except *Hamlet*). We will talk about *how* to read plays in class.

NOTE ON HAMLET

Unless you know the play well, or have read it in the past year, the version of *Hamlet* in *Understanding Plays* is not satisfactory. Find a copy of *Hamlet* with good footnotes. There are two versions on Reserve for the course at the library, both of which have extensive notes and synopses. Another version is available online through the library as E-Book PR 2807.A2 R34 2003eb.

If you find that reading Shakespeare is like reading ancient Greek, then try No Fear Shakespeare at nfs.sparknotes.com/hamlet/. This gives a line-by-line translation into contemporary English. If you use this version, remember that it is not a substitute for reading Shakespeare's actual text and that the translation is one interpretation of the lines, but not necessarily the only one or the correct one.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

There are 10 writing assignments in this class. They are all short (some only a page) but you must stay on top of these. Assignments will be discussed in class and posted on Moodle. **Though they are short, all rules of academic writing must be observed. Proofread your papers.** Make sure you understand and observe the due date of each assignment. More information to come.

QUIZZES

These are take home quizzes that will be given to you at least five days before they are due. They will test concepts and materials covered in class **and departmental productions**. You should treat them as short papers, so **all rules of academic writing must be observed**.

PLAGIARISM

You are responsible for being familiar with the standards of academic honesty outlined in the handbook of Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, using ideas and statements of others without giving appropriate credit. This includes statements or ideas of your classmates, *Understanding Plays* author Milly Barranger, critics, scholars and Wikipedia.

COMPUTERS

The use of iphones, laptops or other computer devices is not allowed in class unless specified. As theatre people, we must honor live, unmitigated interaction. Checking Facebook during class is rude to the person talking and to the person sitting behind you (who can't help but see your screen). This may seem old-fashioned, but theatre is a pretty old-fashioned art form.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Research is pretty clear that understanding of class material is related closely to attendance. **I take attendance at the beginning of each class** and I don't go back to fill in the people who came late. So don't come late. Sleeping in class does not count as attending. I will ask you to leave. Attendance is worth 12% of your grade (120 points).

ADVICE

Do not wait until you are having a big problem to talk to me. Talk to me when it is still a little problem.

Do not miss turning in an assignment and then talk to me about why you couldn't get it in on time. Talk to me before you miss the deadline.

Do not fall behind, hoping you'll catch up, or that there will be a chance for extra credit. You probably won't, and there will not be. If you really don't know what's going on, come see me during office hours or make an appointment.

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SCHEDULE

Subject to change. Please read each play and essay **before** we discuss it in class.

Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
Sep 2	Introduction		
4	Plays and Playing		
9	Theories of origin and 4 ways of reading.		
11	<i>Fences</i> . Reading, writing, analyzing.	<i>Fences</i>	Assignment 1
16	<i>Fences</i> : plot breads and 9 steps		
18	Oedipus	<i>Oedipus the King</i> .	Assignment 2
23	<i>Oedipus the King</i> . Plot and action.	"Ancient Greece & Rome" (Moodle) Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i> (p. 227)	
25	No Class. (This course only)		
30	Thought experiment.	"Middle Ages" and "Golden Age" (Moodle)	
Oct. 2	Oedipus to <i>Hamlet</i> .	<i>Hamlet</i>	
7	<i>Hamlet</i> : plot and action		Assignment 3
9	<i>Hamlet</i> character		
14	No Class. MONDAY SCHEDULE		
16	Comedy / <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	
21	Modern plays	"Theatre and Reality" (Moodle)	
23	<i>Hedda Gabler</i> . Character and the world	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>	Assignment 4
28	No Class. (This course only)		
30	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>		
31	Friday. Quiz due by 12Noon		Quiz 1
Nov 4	Critique: Feminist, African-American, Queer	Dolan (564)	
6	<i>How I Learned to Drive</i>	<i>How I Learned to Drive</i>	Assignment 5
11	No class. Veterans day		
12	Wed. Class. <i>Laramie Project</i>	<i>Laramie Project</i>	Assignment 6
13	Metaphors, as ifs, and audience	<i>Galileo</i>	
18	<i>Galileo</i>	Brecht (613)	Assignment 7
20	<i>Footfalls</i> . Minimalism and the absurd.	<i>Footfalls</i> / Esslin (524)	
25	<i>Footfalls</i>		Assignment 8
27	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
Dec 2	Juxtaposition: <i>Songs of the Dragons</i> <i>Flying to Heaven</i>	<i>Songs of the Dragons</i> <i>Flying to Heaven</i>	Assignment 9
4	Solo: Deb Margolin	<i>The Secaucus Monologue</i>	Assignment 10
11	Quiz #2 due		Quiz 2