

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 125: Text Studies for Production
Fall 2014 – Tuesday/Thursday – 12:30-1:50 pm
Location: SGM 101

Instructor: Andrew J. Henkes

Office: MCC 202 (shared with Dr. Meiling Cheng)

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:00 pm or by appointment

Contact Info: henkes@usc.edu (response within 24 hours)
917 607 0740 (cell, urgent matters only please)

Assistant Instructors/Teaching Assistants:

Contact Info: Cort Brinkerhoff - mcbrinke@usc.edu
Chloe Huang – lutinghu@usc.edu
Ashley Wellman – awellman@usc.edu

Course Description and Overview

This course illuminates the techniques of dramatic analysis employed by theater artists in translating text to live performance. How do structure, action and character affect (and effect) story? What key concepts are fundamental to the mechanics of script-based performance? How do directors, actors and designers develop interpretations that are not only creative but also grounded in play texts? Drawing on the theories of Aristotle, Ball, Brecht, Katz, Nietzsche, and Stanislavski, students will practice identifying dramatic elements and structure within diverse plays and consider the practical merits of various theoretical models. Moreover, participants will learn about the relationship between form and story in performed drama.

Learning Objectives

- Learn theories and models of dramatic analysis
- Apply theoretical concepts to plays in order to develop sound dramatic interpretations
- Hone critical skills in papers, presentations and discussions

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-Requisite (s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: None

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

The following texts are available for purchase in the university bookstore:

Ball, David. *Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983.

Gainor, J. Ellen, Stanton Garner, Jr., and Martin Puchner, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Drama: Shorter Second Edition*, second edition. New York: Norton, 2014.

Katz, Leon. *Cleaning Augean Stables: Examining Drama's Strategies*. San Bernardino: Self-published, 2012.

All other readings and handouts will be available via Blackboard and/or through the library.

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

A (A 95-100 / A- 90-94): Excellent work demonstrating student's ability to engage the materials in a provocative, creative, and insightful manner; clearly written with no or minimal typographical or grammatical errors.

B (B+ 87-89 / B 83-86 / B- 80-82): Good work demonstrating student's understanding of materials and ability to apply knowledge; minor writing and/or conceptual problems.

C (C+ 77-79 / C 73-76 / C- 70-72): Average work reflecting the completion of the assignment requirements and demonstrating some understanding of materials; lacks clear writing and/or is inadequately proofread.

D (D+ 67-69 / D 63-66 / D- 60-62): Below average quality of work or failure to meet majority of requirements of the assignment.

F (below 60): Inadequate work or failure to complete the assignment.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Discussion Section	15	15
Paper #1	10	10
Midterm Examination	10	10
Paper #2	15	15
Oral Presentation	10	10
Paper #3	20	20
Final Examination	20	20
TOTAL	100	100

Discussion Section

Active participation in discussion sections constitutes an important element of this course. Assistant instructors/teaching assistants accordingly will lead students in exercises and conversations that will account for 15% of the final grade. For this reason, attendance and participation are essential.

Paper #1

In this 2-3 page essay, you will articulate a thesis about the relationship between divinity and Medea in Euripides' *Medea* and use the concepts from Aristotle's *Poetics* to analyze specific examples from the play in support of your thesis.

Midterm

The midterm shall consist of a combination of short-answer questions and/or essay questions on the analytical models and dramatic texts covered throughout the first half of the course.

Paper #2

In this 4-5 page paper, you will apply Stanislavski's or Ball's theoretical concepts to a scene of significant action from *Medea*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night* or *Loa for the Divine Narcissus*. In your paper, you will demonstrate how the actions move the scene forward, and how the scene advances the story of the play.

Oral Presentation

Each student will present a production plan on an assigned play as part of a group. Presentations will include an overview of the artistic vision underlying its production, examples of how to actualize this vision in performance through direction, acting and design, and critical analysis to support this vision by employing ideas from the critical models we have studied. Presentations should be no more than 12-15 minutes, and should incorporate contributions from all members.

Paper #3

In this 5-7 page research paper, you will research and select a professional production of a play covered in this course and offer an argument based on its efficacy in relation to the original play. Use the terminology and theoretical concepts studied throughout the course to examine the text and critique the effectiveness of the artistic decisions made in the production. Support your criticism with proper citations and compelling evidence.

Final Exam

The final exam shall consist of a combination of short-answer questions and/or essay questions on the analytical models and dramatic texts covered in the second half of course.

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments must be submitted to your assistant instructor/teaching assistant in hard copy by 12:45 pm on the day they are due AND electronically by 6:00 pm that same day. Late assignments will not be accepted unless an extension is secured from the professor at least 3 days in advance of the due date or the student can document extenuating circumstances (any exemptions are subject to the professor's discretion).

Attendance Policy

Students must attend all lectures and discussion sections as scheduled - the School of Dramatic Arts does not allow unexcused absences. Before the start of the lecture each day, students shall check-in with their assistant instructor/teaching assistant to be counted as present. Students who have to leave early must inform their assistant instructor/teaching assistant at the start of the class that they will be leaving early. Students caught leaving class early without notice will be considered absent from the whole day otherwise.

**All unexcused absences will result in two points subtracted from the student's final course grade.
Students who arrive after the start of the lecture will lose 1/2 point from their final course grade.**

Absences for documented emergency or medical reasons might be excused at the professor's discretion.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

All reading assignments are due before lecture on the date assigned below.

Ball = *Backwards and Forwards*; Katz = *Cleaning Augean Stables*; Norton = *The Norton Anthology of Drama*;

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments due
1	T	8/26	Introduction: Story & Action		
	Th	8/28	Aristotle on Tragedy, <i>Medea</i>	Katz 5-24; Norton 135-149	
2	T	9/2	Character, <i>Medea</i>	Katz 126-160; Norton 149-163	
	Th	9/4	Other Elements, <i>Medea</i>	Katz 180-234, 267-269; Norton 163-174	
3	T	9/9	Aristotle on Comedy, <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Katz 77-89; Norton 363-365, 369-374, 471-501	
	Th	9/11	Active Analysis: <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Katz 55-76, 161-179; Norton 501-534	
4	T	9/16	Text Work, <i>Twelfth Night</i>		Paper #1
	Th	9/18	Ball's "Shape," <i>A Long Day's Journey Into Night</i>	Ball 3-36; Norton 1108-1132	
5	T	9/23	Ball's "Methods," <i>Long Day's</i>	Ball 37-78; Norton 1132-1165	
	Th	9/25	Ball's "Tricks," <i>Long Day's</i>	Ball 79-96; Norton 1166-1192	
6	T	9/30	Alternative Structures	Katz 25-37, 90-125	
	Th	10/2	Midterm		
7	T	10/7	Ritual, <i>Loa for the Divine Narcissus</i>	De la Cruz (Blackboard), Nietzsche (Blackboard)	
	Th	10/9	<i>Dionysus in 69</i>		

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments due
8	T	10/14	Stasis and Process, <i>Waiting for Godot</i>	Norton 1352-1389	
	Th	10/16	<i>Waiting for Godot</i>	Norton 1389-1415	
9	T	10/21	Non-Linearity, <i>The America Play</i>	Katz 38-54; Norton 1820-1835	Paper #2
	Th	10/23	<i>The America Play</i>	Norton 1835-1853	
10	T	10/28	Empathy and Alienation, <i>Good Woman of Sichuan</i>	Brecht (Blackboard); Norton 1050-1076	
	Th	10/30	<i>Good Woman of Sichuan</i>	Norton 1076-1107	
11	T	11/4	Oral Presentations		Presentations
	Th	11/6	Oral Presentations		Presentations
12	T	11/11	Oral Presentations		Presentations
	Th	11/13	Oral Presentations Metatheater & Surreality	Norton 945-966	Presentations
13	T	11/18	<i>Six Characters in Search ...</i>	Norton 967-988	
	Th	11/20	<i>Cloud Nine</i>	Katz 235-264; Norton 1520-1551	
14	T	11/25	<i>Cloud Nine</i>	Norton 1552-1574	
	Th	11/27	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY		
15	T	12/2	Dramatic Analysis in Practice		Paper #3
	Th	12/4	Review and Final Remarks		

Final Examination Date: Tuesday, December 16 11:00 am - 1:00 pm in SGM 101

All students must attend the scheduled final exam as per university policy. Requests to take the exam on an alternate date cannot be accommodated.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:
http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX), ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.