

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for THEA 53

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Effective: Fall 2017

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

THEA 53 — SCRIPT ANALYSIS — 3.00 units

Develops critical thinking, analysis, and writing skills as they apply to the exploration of the principles, theories and techniques of play script analysis for theatrical production. Class content includes the historical and cultural context of various kinds of script; genre and form; narrative and plot analysis; linguistic analysis; interpreting stage directions; and identification of main themes. Emphasis on effective written communication in literature. Research required.

3.00 Units Lecture

Prerequisite

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition
with a minimum grade of C

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering the course a student should be able to:

A. ENG1A

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. The student will learn how to analyze a play script:
 1. Recognize the elements of the "well made" play by studying play scripts
 2. Identify cause and effect relationship of actions on the stage
 3. Discuss how to recognize the theme of a play
 4. Recognize how the analysis differs for a director, actor, and designer
 5. Determine background information, subtext, and the unique factor of a play
- B. Obtain a greater comprehension and satisfaction when reading a play
- C. Discover the patterns common to most, if not all, dramatic storytelling
- D. Practice applying an analytical framework to several model plays
- E. Write critically, both personally and academically, about drama and script analysis in a sequence of essays throughout the semester, as a response to each play read. Essays should approximate between 1000-2000 words in length, for not less than 6000 words per semester.
- F. Undertake individually both a creative and analytical response to a chosen play
- G. Communicate an understanding on the relationship between language, theatrical literature, and performance of works of theater
- H. Evaluate the relationship between a script's meaning, author intent, cultural reflection and connection, and the presentation intent for stage
- I. Explain, analyze, and apply a literary argument and related critical evaluation using logical patterns of reasoning, such as induction and deduction.
- J. Identify logical and literary fallacies in scripts--in themes, plots, or the perspectives of characters--and/or in student and published literary analysis, such as hasty generalization, and appeals to fear, pity, aesthetics, or pathos.
- K. Demonstrate composition skills:
 1. Explore a line of inquiry and limit the topic appropriately
 2. Establish and state clearly a unifying thesis or proposition select examples, details, and other evidence to support or validate the thesis and other generalizations and elaborate upon subtopics
 3. Use principles of inductive and deductive logic to support and develop ideas
 4. Create coherence in paragraphs and in the overall focus of the essay
 5. Format all major essays according to MLA guidelines
 6. Use appropriate diction, logic, variety of sentence structure, coherence, citation, and sophistication of ideas, including originality of thought and an avoidance of cliché and repetition

V. CONTENT:

- A. Fully explore an in-depth methodology of reading, analyzing and understanding play scripts in a variety of genres and styles intended for production.
- B. Investigate techniques used to determine how to read a play for its' structure.
- C. Scrutinize the playwright's methods of creating theatre through plot, character and imagery.
- D. Using critical analysis, understand what scripts "mean" to the professional theatre artist and theatre-goer as distinct from other forms of literature.
- E. Complete research as a means of understanding historical and cultural impact of theater plays as a means of communication and/or cultural experience reflection.
- F. Compose critical analysis in the form of essay for communication of said analysis

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Guest Lecturers** - Once
- B. **Lecture** - Daily
- C. **Research** - 1-2x per semester
- D. Group work when reading and evaluating at least one (1) work of theater
- E. **Written exercises and case studies** - Weekly - includes in-class writing; informal writing, including essay drafts; summary/response writing; multiple essays (essays must total at least 6,000 words of "final draft" writing).
- F. **Critique** - 1-2x per semester for live theater 3-5x per semester for script analysis

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. In essay format, describe Aristotle's most important arguments in his critical work *The Poetics*.
- B. Compare the turning point to the climax using one play in a short essay/written assignment.
- C. Illustrate the main points an assigned play using visuals. Visuals might include drawings, photos, performance, models, etc.
- D. Identify and analyze three images in one play, and describe your process for selection and critical analysis.
- E. Identify theme in a selected work. Argue its use throughout the play as a writing device, citing references from the play. 1 research source required.
- F. In written analysis, discuss the components of language using one scene from an assigned work as an example.
- G. Participate in a panel discussion on a topic, case study, play, or production concept.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

- 1. Exams/Tests
- 2. Quizzes
- 3. Research Projects
- 4. Papers
- 5. Class Participation
- 6. Class Work

B. **Frequency**

Daily written prompts

Daily discussion participation

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Thomas, James. *Script Analysis for Actors, Directors, and Designer*. 5 ed., Focal press, 2014.
- 2. Whiltshire, Kim. *Writing for Theatre: Creative and Critical Approaches (Approaches to Writing)*. 1 ed., Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- 3. Jacobus, Lee. *The Bedford Introduction to Drama*. 7 ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013.
- 4. Ball, David. *Backwards & Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*. 1 ed., Southern Illinois University Press, 1983.
- 5. Specific plays, as assigned by instructor, not included in the Bedford anthology, which would reflect a range of historical and cultural exploration. Texts such as, but not limited to (text may vary per semester, as the literature of modern theater changes):
 - August Wilson. *The Piano Lesson*
 - Zeami. *Hagoromo*
 - Sophocles. *Antigone*
 - Suzan-Lori Parks. *Topdog/Underdog*
 - Molière. *The Imaginary Invalid*
 - Tennessee Williams. *A Streetcar Named Desire*
 - Calderon de la Barca. *Life Is a Dream*
 - Georg Büchner. *Woyzeck*
 - Dion Boucicault. *The Poor of New York*
 - Arthur Miller. *Death of a Salesman*
 - Bertolt Brecht. *Mother Courage and Her Children*
 - William Shakespeare. *Henry IV pt. 1*
- 6. Aristotle's *The Poetics*

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Assigned scripts selected by instructor, reflective of contemporary culture. Selected scripts may change from semester to semester of course offering, dependent on trends and new relevant works of theater