

Drama 120: Play Analysis

Spring 2008

Section 002: TR 9:30-10:45 PM – Alumni Hall 207

Instructor: Mark Perry

Office: CDA 206. Office hours: TR 11:15-12:15pm or by appt.

Phone: 962-1132 (Dept of Dramatic Art)

Email: mperry9@email.unc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION – “Development of the skill to analyze plays for academic and production purposes through the intensive study of representative plays. DRAM 120 is the first course in the major and the minors in Dramatic Art.”

OVERVIEW – This “Play Analysis” class is designed to hone the participant’s skill of understanding how plays work. This is essential for theatre practitioners, but a spectator or reader of drama may find it illuminating as well. The ultimate goal is not to master any individual play, but to develop the capacity to look at any play and get to know it on its own terms, before bringing the individual power of interpretation to take the script from “page to stage.” Plays, after all, are meant to be performed and not just read.

This class is different than the “survey” classes of DRAM 115 & 116, where you may read & discuss a play a week. Here we will study intensely five classics of the Western Dramatic Canon—*Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Cherry Orchard* & *The Importance of Being Earnest*, using these texts to help us peer more deeply into the principles of dramatic storytelling. Then, each participant will choose one of three other plays and apply the learned skills with an individual project that involves both critical analysis and creative interpretation.

OBJECTIVES – This course is designed to enable you to do the following:

- Deepen your comprehension and satisfaction when reading a play
- Discover the patterns common to most, if not all, dramatic storytelling
- Practice applying an analytical framework to several model plays
- Sharpen your ability to write both personally and academically about drama
- Undertake individually both a creative and analytical response to a chosen play
- Open up to experience the live drama that thrives on the UNC campus

TEXTBOOKS – Understanding Plays, Milly S. Barranger, 3rd edition.

[Recommended: A Short Guide to Writing About Theatre, by Marcia Ferguson.]

LIVE PERFORMANCES – There are many opportunities to see theatre on campus this fall, and you are encouraged to take advantage of this. You are only required to see two productions by Playmakers Repertory Company (PRC):

Doubt, by John Patrick Shanley, Jan 26 – Feb 26

Topdog / Underdog, by Suzan-Lori Parks. Jan 27 – Feb 27

Amadeus by Peter Shaffer. April 2 – 20

[Shows run Tue - Sat at 8pm, Sun at 2pm at the Paul Green Theatre. Get tickets at the Box Office across from the Theatre, on the 1st floor of the Center for Dramatic Art, or by calling 962-7529.]

EXTRA CREDIT – If you go see any other plays this semester and turn in a satisfactory one page response, you’ll add 1 point to your final grade. (Maximum: 3 plays)

DDA PRIVILEGE CARD – Purchase this card at the Bullshead Bookshop and get a big discount on admission to the PRC shows. The card is \$17 plus tax, and when you bring your card to the Box Office, you will get a free ticket to each of the above plays and other Dept of Dramatic Art productions. Limitations apply on dates, and you must buy your card by January 25. More info is posted on Blackboard under “Course Information.”

ATTENDANCE & CLASS PARTICIPATION – Being in class is very important as the course content often veers widely from the text. It’s important to do reading & all other assignments when they’re due. Bring pen, paper, and your text to class. You are expected to contribute to class discussions frequently with comments or questions. Absences, tardies and lack of participation will result in up to 10 points being taken off your grade.

HOMEWORK & PLAY PROFILES – You are required to have a 3-ring binder (½”-1”) to hold all homework assignments. From time to time, these binders will be collected, reviewed and graded with or without advance notice. If your work is not ready when it is requested, it can be turned in late (with a penalty) to my box in the DDA office. Do not email work, and always be sure to keep a copy on file in case the one you hand in gets lost. Among your homework assignments will be the “play profiles” you will be developing for *Oedipus*, *Hamlet*, *Glass Menagerie*, *Cherry Orchard*, *Importance of Being Earnest*, and your class project play. More specific expectations will be provided.

EXAMS – There are two exams, together worth 35% of your overall grade. The exams will test your understanding of the plays you read and see, analytical terms and concepts, plus other material from class lectures and discussions. They will also test your ability to apply that understanding. Bring your own scantron sheets and pencils to the exam.

CLASS PROJECT – After the midterm exam, each student will choose a play to concentrate on for his or her class project. For that play, the student will develop a play profile (as described above) and write a 4-5 page critical paper. The student will also play the part of theatre practitioner (actor, director, playwright, or designer) and engage in a unique creative interpretation, which he or she will present to the class. The class project is worth 25% of the total grade.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Participation/Attendance	10%
Homework/Play Profile Binder	30%
Class Project (includes play profile, 4-5 page paper & creative project)	25%
Midterm Exam (Thu, Mar 6):	15%
Final Exam (Tue, Apr 29):	20%

HONOR CODE – The University maintains an Honor Code that helps us uphold our integrity as students and faculty at Carolina. Your work should be your own and it should reflect your own individual thought process. Beware of plagiarism. Beware of ‘collaborating’ unless the assignment is specified as group work. Sources you use must be clearly referenced. Obviously, you should receive no help when taking an exam. More at <http://honor.unc.edu>.

Drama 120, Section 002 Class Schedule

Class	Date	Scheduled Topic	Reading / Homework DUE
1	Thu, Jan 10	Course Introduction; Play Response Pages	
2	Tue, Jan 15	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	pp. 3-12; 202-226 + Response
3	Thu, Jan 17	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	Revelation Exercise
4	Tue, Jan 22	<i>Hamlet</i>	pp. 22-89 + Response
5	Thu, Jan 24	<i>Hamlet</i>	pp. 89-96; Event summaries
6	Tue, Jan 29	Play Structure	Crisis Exercise
7	Thu, Jan 31	Play Structure	Plot Elements Exercise
8	Tue, Feb 5	<i>Glass Menagerie</i>	pp. 107-140, 140-5, Response
9	Thu, Feb 7	<i>Glass Menagerie</i> ; “Doubt”	pp. 97-106
10	Tue, Feb 12	Character; “Topdog/Underdog”	Constellation of Character Ex.
11	Thu, Feb 14	Character	Intention / Obstacle Ex.
12	Tue, Feb 19	<i>Cherry Orchard</i>	pp. 155-185, 185-9, Response
13	Thu, Feb 21	<i>Cherry Orchard</i>	pp. 147-154
14	Tue, Feb 26	Language	Shape of a Scene Ex.
15	Thu, Feb 28	Language	Dramatic Beat Analysis
16	Tue, Mar 4	Midterm Review	Silence that Speaks Ex.
17	Thu, Mar 6	MIDTERM EXAM	Study for Midterm
		[No class Mar 10 – Mar 14]	
18	Tue, Mar 18	<i>Importance of Being Earnest</i> & Dramatic Genre	pp.237-73 +Response
19	Thu, Mar 20	<i>Importance of Being Earnest</i> & Dramatic Genre	pp.234-6, 274-7, 280-2
20	Tue, Mar 25	Class Project Overview; Creative Interpretations	Read <u>Short Guide to Writing</u>
21	Thu, Mar 27	Creative Interpretations II; Project Sign up	Read <u>Short Guide to Writing</u>
22	Tue, Apr 1	Writing About Theatre	Read <u>Short Guide to Writing</u>
23	Thu, Apr 3	Writing About Theatre	Writing Assignment
24	Tue, Apr 8	<i>Galileo</i>	pp. 474-513 + Response
25	Thu, Apr 10	<i>Galileo</i> ; “Amadeus”	Group 1 projects
26	Tue, Apr 15	<i>Fences</i>	pp. 425-467 + Response
27	Thu, Apr 17	<i>Fences</i>	Group 2 projects
28	Tue, Apr 22	<i>How I Learned to Drive</i>	pp. 534-566 + Response
29	Thu, Apr 24	<i>How I Learned to Drive</i> ; Final Review	Group 3 projects
Final	Tue, Apr 29	FINAL EXAM at 8am	Study for Final