

**TH 543: Script Analysis**  
**Prof. Steven Burch**  
**RJ 219**  
**348-0343, [sburch@as.ua.edu](mailto:sburch@as.ua.edu)**  
**or by appointment**

**Fall 2012**  
**Tu-Th 2-3:15pm**  
**RJ 204**  
**Office: Tu 12:30-1:30pm**

**Required Texts:**

Anne Fliotsos, *Interpreting the Playscript* [IPS]  
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*  
Steven Burch, ed. *Course Reader* [CR]

**Purpose:**

To learn how to approach any play and find its inherent dramatic and cultural meanings as they apply to your field of endeavor as actors, directors, or designers.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- \*To systematically dissect play scripts and with appropriate methodology
- \*To create a workable (i.e., theatrically valid) analysis from which to progress toward a production.

**Attendance:**

This is mandatory. We only meet twice a week and your participation is essential to your development, even when others are doing the speaking. I will allow three absences, no questions asked. These are not freebies. Use them, if you must, sparingly. After a third unexcused absence, your grade will begin to be lowered a half-grade (such as an A- to a B+) for each subsequent absence. While there are no extra points for perfect attendance, it may put you over a line if you are straddling it by the semester's end. [Tardiness will be punished as well: 3 tardies will equal 1 unexcused absence.]

**Class Projects:**

This class isn't about my lectures. It's about your readings and your understanding of them and your application of your understanding. I will assign student teams to present that day's specific material and lead discussions. This will be graded as classroom discussion. Additionally, all students will be expected to bring in collages of images and materials on each play and present them. Details will follow.

**Play Reviews:**

You will be required to attend the four play productions for this semester in the Gallaway and Allen Bales Theatres. You will be given a brief writing assignment regarding an analysis of these plays as encountered in performance. Those class members involved with more than one production will need to see me to arrange an alternate assignment. Plays perform Non-Sat at 7:30pm and Sunday at 2pm except where indicated \*.  
*Side Man* (Leight), Gallaway Theatre, Oct 15-21  
*Fools* (Congden), Allen Bales Theatre, Sept 24-28, 30 (2pm and 7:30 pm)\*  
*A New Brain* (Finn and Lapine), Allen Bales Theatre, Oct 29-Nov 4  
*Misalliance* (Shaw), Gallaway Theatre, Nov 12-16, Nov 18 (2pm)\*

**Individual Final Reports:**

You are required to put together an analysis of a play from my list and from an interpretation also of my choosing (I will assign various interpretive tools, e.g., Marxist, radical feminist, queer, postmodern, new historicist, bourgeois feminist, environmental, etc.) for each student to approach that play. The analysis will be roughly 15-20 minutes in length, you will be able to use a variety of media for your presentation, and will be in lieu of a final exam. Details will be forthcoming.

**Videos:**

There will be occasion for us to watch a video production. When this is to occur, we may meet in an alternate location, to be announced.

**Academic Misconduct:**

Cheating or plagiarism will be severely penalized. Papers must be original work, written by you and you only for this class. Downloads from websites or adaptations from previous coursework are unacceptable. Consult the *Student Handbook*, which is available from Student Services, for a complete definition of academic misconduct.

**Disability Students:**

To request disability accommodations, please contact Disabilities Services at 348-4285. After initial arrangements are made with this office, contact your professor.

**Addenda:**

**ALL** cell phones, beepers, and pagers must be turned off for the duration of each class. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS** to this rule. Also **NO FOOD** is allowed. Please be courteous to your neighbors and refrain from talking or making unnecessary noise during the class.

**Grading:**

There may be quizzes for each essay read. Classroom participation will be graded as well as classroom discussions which are led. The Individual Final report will receive the greatest focus. The break-down is:

|                                                  |             |            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
|                                                  | 1000-970 A+ | 769-730 C  |
| 4 Play reviews @ 100 points = 400 pts.           | 969-930 A   | 729-700 C- |
| Group reports @ 250 points = 250 pts.            | 929-900 A-  | 699-670 D+ |
| Classroom Participation @ 100 points = 100 pts.  | 899-870 B+  | 669-630 D  |
| Individual Final Reports @ 250 points = 250 pts. | 869-830 B   | 629-600 D- |
|                                                  | 829-800 B-  | 599-0 F    |
| Total = 1000 pts.                                | 799-770 C+  |            |

**Schedule by week # subject to change (+ means an assignment due)**

**Aug. 23:** Introductions, Housekeeping

**#1 Aug. 28:**

Meet at Gorgas Library lobby with Cynthia Miller: researching materials presentation

**Thurs, Aug. 30:** Harold Clurman, "Reading the Script" [CR]

Francis Hodge, Ch 1: "How to read a Play;" Ch 2: "Foundation and Façade of Playscript" [CR]

Fliotsos, Introduction, pg 1-8 [IPS]

**Mon, Sept 3: Labor Day, No Classes**

**#2 Sept 4-6:**

William Ball, "Predominant Element," "World of Play," "Metaphor" [CR]

Fliotsos: Exercise, pg 8 [IPS]+

William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*

**#3: Sept 11-13**

Hodge, Ch 3: "Hard Core of the Playscript" [CR]

Michael Bloom, Ch 1: "Reading and Researching" [CR]

Fliotsos: Contemplation, Intuitive Response pg 9-25 [IPS]

William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*

**#4: Sept 18-20**

Fliotsos: 25-28, Exercise pg 27 [IPS]+

Aristotle: *The Poetics* [CR]

Bloom, Ch 2: "Interpreting the Action" [CR]

Hodge, Ch 4: "Derivatives of Dramatic Action" [CR]

**#5: Sept 25-27**

Fliotsos: Ch. 2 Formalist Analysis, pg 35-42 [IPS]

Bloom, Ch 3: "External Analysis: Structure" [CR]

Hodge, Ch 5: "The Director's Preparation" [CR]

Euripides: *The Trojan Women* [CR]

**VIDEO:** *Trojan Women* (Cacoyannis)

**#6: Oct 2**

Fliotsos: Exercise on Character, pg 53 [IPS]+

Video: *Trojan Women*

## Midsemester Study Break Oct 4-5

### #7: Oct 9-11

Henrik Ibsen: *Doll's House* [CR]

Fliotsos: pg 54-73 [IPS]

Video: *Doll's House* (Garland)

### #8: Oct 16-18

Mark Fortier, "Postmodern Theory" [CR]

Fliotsos: 76-98 "Interpreting the Non-Linear Play" [IPS]

### #9: Oct 23-25

Dylan Thomas: *Under Milkwood* [handout]

**Sound recording:** *Under Milkwood* [original cast]

### #10: Oct 30

Shelagh Delaney: *Taste of Honey* [CR]

Fliotsos: pg 101-113 [IPS]

**YouTube:** scenes from *Taste of Honey*

### #10: Nov. 1

Sebastian Barry: *The Steward of Christendom* [CR]

### #11: Nov 6

Hodge, Ch 6: "Style in Playscripts" [CR]

**VIDEO:** American Vaudeville and Sit-coms (Sid Caesar, Dick Van Dyke, Roc)

### #11: Nov 8

A.J. Russell and Herbert Finn: "A Matter of Record," *The Honeymooners* [CR]

**VIDEO:** *The Honeymooners*

### #12: Nov 13

Presentation 1 and 2

### #12: Nov 15

Presentation #3 and 4

### #13: Nov 20

Presentation #5 and 6

**Wed-Sun, Nov 21-25: Thanksgiving Break**

**#14: Nov. 27**

Presentation #7 and 8

**#14: Nov. 29**

Presentation #9 and 10

**#15: Dec. 4**

Presentation #11 and 12

**#15: Dec. 6**

Presentation #13

Final Thoughts

TH 543 Group and Individual Reports

*The Trojan Women* (Euripides), Oct. 2

*A Doll's House* (Ibsen), Oct. 11

*Under Milkwood* (Thomas), Oct. 23

*A Taste of Honey* (Delaney), Oct. 30

*The Steward of Christendom* (Barry), Nov. 1

*The Honeyymooners* (Russell and Finn), Nov. 8

Individual Final Reports

1. Tom Stoppard, *Coast of Utopia*
2. Jean Genet, *The Balcony*
3. August Wilson, *Fences*
4. Shakespeare, *Othello*
5. Phillip Barry, *The Philadelphia Story*
6. Megan Terry, *Calm Down Mother*
7. Sam Shepard, *Suicide in B Flat*
8. Sophocles, *Ajax*
9. Ntozake Shange, *for colored girls*
10. Charles Ludlam, *Bluebeard*
11. Maria Irene Fornes, *Conduct of Life*
12. Sara Ruhl, *Passion Play*
13. Caryl Churchill, *Cloud Nine*

Potential Isms:

*Bluebeard*: feminist, post-structuralist, queer, postmodern

*Othello*: psychoanalytic, interculturalism, postcolonial

*The Balcony*: queer studies; Marxist, absurdist

*Fences*: black revolutionary theatre, gender studies, Marxist, materialist

*Cloud Nine*: feminist, post-colonial, semiotic, postmodern

*Passion Play*: post-feminist, post-structuralist

*for colored girls*: black revolutionary theatre, feminist

*Calm Down Mother*: feminist, post-structuralist, absurdist

*Suicide in B Flat*: absurdist, postmodern, semiotics, phenomenology

*Coast of Utopia*: feminist, postmodern, Marxist, new historicism

*Ajax*: queer studies, new historicism, masculinist

*Conduct of Life*: feminist, materialist, postcolonial

*The Philadelphia Story*: feminist, materialist, Marxist