

**THE 2380. PLAY ANALYSIS and AESTHETICS**  
**3 class hours, 3 credits**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The analysis of play scripts for literary structure, aesthetic elements necessary for their theatrical realization, and an appreciation of stylistic approaches to plays from various historical and theatrical genres.

PREREQUISITE - ENG 1101

**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

5-9 play scripts from representative authors, eras, and styles, plus a textbook.

Representative Playwrights To Be Read

Albee, Anouilh, Baraka, Beckett, Brecht, Calderon, Chekhov, Churchill, Euripides, Giradoux, Glaspell, Gorky, Hansberry, Ibsen, Inge, Ionesco, Kaiser, Kushner, Mamet, Miller, Moliere, Norman (Marsha), O'Neill, Parks, Pinter, Pirandello, Plautus, Schnitzler, Shaffer, Shakespeare, Shaw, Shepard, Sheridan, Smith (Anna Deavere), Sophocles, Soyinka, Synge, Tredwell, Williams, Wilson (August), Wilson (Lanford)

Typical Textbooks:

Longman, Stanley Vincent. *Page and Stage: An Approach to Script Analysis*, 2004.

Printer, Cal & Scott E. Walters: *Introduction to Play Analysis*, 2004.

Aristotle, *Poetics* (excerpts).

**SAMPLE SEQUENCE OF TOPICS:**

A new play is introduced about every two weeks; concepts are applied to all plays studied.

Dramatic Form vs. Narrative Form; Approaches to Analysis: Aristotle, Stanislavsky. Design-based.

Analysis of Aristotelian elements: Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Music, Spectacle

Given Circumstances

The Theatrical Contract

Attendance at Live Theatre Performance; Theatrical contracts and conventions in performance.

Analyzing Character through Dialogue, Language & Action.

Midterm Exam; Dramatic Genres

Conflict/Resolution Plot Structure

Aristotelian Plot Structure

The Scene as a Unit of Conflict. Beats.

Attendance at Live Theatre Performance; Actors' Character Analysis

Non-linear Plot Structures

Theatrical Contract & Given Circumstances of Fantastical Plays

Production Analysis: Direction; Design

Group Presentations

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the conclusion of this course, students will

be able to decipher the structure of dramatic works;

be able to identify and apply Aristotelian components of dramatic structure;

understand the processes involved in the theatrical realization of a script;

be able to identify plays by genre and socio-historical context;  
be able to analyze plays using professional vocabulary;  
understand the varying approaches required for different design aesthetics;  
Collateral learning goals include  
critical thinking skills  
reinforcement of students' ability to communicate effectively in oral language  
reinforcement of students' ability to communicate effectively in written language  
reinforcement of information literacy and research skills  
reinforcement of group collaboration skills.

## ASSESSMENT

Student progress is assessed both orally and written in writing through multiple measures. Oral Assessment. Participation in group discussion indicates how well the student is learning to identify and analyze the structure, content, genre, and theme of dramatic literature. Circular seating is often used to facilitate inclusive discussion. Students demonstrate knowledge and critical thinking by explaining their own work to the class in informal and prepared presentations. For example, students create a Character Map, and then justify the spatial arrangement chosen; Students submit a draft of an essay, and then explain their thesis to the group. Students do 2-3 formal oral presentations of information they have researched on Given Circumstances, Production Concept, and Scene Analysis.

Written Assessment. Professional Vocabulary and basic understanding of plot for a given play is assessed through the completion of a Basic Play Analysis questionnaire. Short, in-class response papers demonstrate student understanding of aesthetic and thematic elements. Deeper understanding is assessed through successive drafts of student papers, which reinforce writing and critical thinking skills. Exams include both objective and essay questions. Objective sections of examinations will assess understanding of plots, terminology and basic concepts, while essay sections will assess ability to express analysis and interpretation of plays.

## SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENTS

### Oral Assignments

Active, informed participation in discussion.  
Oral Presentation on Given Circumstances.  
Oral Analysis of a scene from a Shakespearean play.  
Oral Presentation on Pre-Production Analysis for a specific play (part of Final Project).

### Written Assignments

Basic Play Analysis Form completed for selected plays: a twenty-question form using standard vocabulary to assess knowledge.  
In-class dramatization exercise: transforming a short narrative into drama.  
In-class short response papers.  
Character Maps: a graphic representation of the relationships in the play.  
Bibliography on Given Circumstance for an assigned play.  
Two drafts of 900-word essay on assigned topic area.  
Dramaturgical Report & Bibliography: a research paper on Given Circumstances and Production History of a specific play (part of Final Project).  
Pre-Production Analysis Paper (part of Final Project).  
Midterm exams on plot and vocabulary and theory.  
Attendance at one or more live theatre performances.

## GRADING

10% Substantive Class Discussion

10% Midterm Exam

30% Basic Play Analysis Forms, Given Circumstances Presentation & Bibliography, in-class writing, Scene Analysis presentation

20% Paper #1

30% Final Project: Dramaturgical Report & Bibliography, Pre-Production Analysis Concept Paper, Pre-Production Presentation

## NYCCT COLLEGE POLICIES

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend each class meeting. A student may be absent without penalty for no more than 10% of the class instructional hours during the semester, that is, 3 absences per semester for a class that meets twice a week. Students who are absent for more than 10% of the hours the course meets are subject to a designation of WU (unofficial withdrawal with penalty) rather than a final grade. The “WU” and “WN” count as an “F” in the computation of the GPA.

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