

# **Script Analysis**

School year 2019-2020

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

As an essential skill, actors, directors, and designers working in play production must have access to tools, methods, and techniques for accessing the meaning behind the text of play scripts. While not all productions will start from a play script, the capacity to base production decisions on a deep understanding of the text (if it exists) is vital. Much like a production, the text itself contains many interlocking parts and relationships: therefore Script Analysis requires close examination of these component parts for the purposes of understanding or interpretation.

This year, we will explore some important elements for analyzing a script in production. This course is designed to provide you with an array of tools, strategies, and methods for reading and analyzing dramatic literature in order to allow creative expression while also keeping the theatrical goals of the production in mind. We will read several classical plays as well as more contemporary dramatic texts, in order to provide you with hands-on experience at performing close reading and employing script analysis techniques, which will enable you to further your growth as a theatre artist. Understanding the creative choices available from rigorous script analysis is a foundational first step towards producing moving, informed, complex, and exciting dramatic work on stage.

We will also examine how power relationships between various diverse identities are negotiated through the play text so that we will be able to make informed political choices about which representations of social identity and cultural norms we want to see reinforced. Finally, in order to demonstrate the acquisition of these new critical thinking skills, a major goal of this course will be to facilitate a structured writing project in order to give students an opportunity to engage in final project that demonstrates your ability to work in a collaborative working environment.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To introduce students to the basic principles, techniques, and challenges of script analysis, where the text is examined from a production viewpoint rather than solely for literary merit.
- To provide students with methods to analyze a play from the perspective of many different members of a production team (including director, performer, designer, playwright, and drama) and begin to make independent choices as an artist.
- To exercise script analysis methods (individually and in groups) through in-depth exploration of play texts
- To engage in both ensemble activities and individual work fully and successfully while developing a distinct artistic voice.

## Course Outline

- i. Understanding Stories
- ii. Exploring how plays are different from other literary products
- iii. Reading Plays - understanding the format and the function
- iv. Overview of Aristotle's Poetic
- v. Elements of story telling
  - a. Drama
  - b. Themes
  - c. Character Development
  - d. Dialogue writing
  - e. Elements of Suspense
  - f. Irony
- vi. Realism and Naturalism
- vii. Expressionism
- viii. Some of the Masters
  - a. Explore, why Shakespeare is important?
  - b. August Wilson
- ix. Screenplay vs Play (differences/similarities explored)
- x. The theater and collaboration between the arts
- xi. Survey of theater works
  - a. Multicultural Theater
  - b. International Theater

## **Assignments:**

**Regular Play Reports:** Students will turn in a play report on each assigned play. The purpose of the report is to begin opening up your thinking about the play and to force you to commit something to paper concerning your point-of-view on the work. The reports are due the first day we discuss a play.

**Reaction Papers:** A reaction paper is a type of written assignment, which requires personal opinion and conclusions on a given article or part of a play. It is **NOT** a summary. a reaction paper should contain your own thoughts on what the play did well, did poorly and what "spoke" to you as a reader. And you should always be including examples from the original text.

**Quizzes:** There will be pop quizzes during the semester. They will be short, lasting approximately 10 minutes each. Quizzes will cover both terminology employed in the class and individual plays.

**Final Project:** With a group of classmates (3-4), you will read one additional play (chosen from a list to be provided later) and design an analytical presentation. More detailed guidelines shall be provided in October. The final project will consist of two separate grades: a group score, worth 50 points, and an individual score, worth 50 points.

## **Journals**

- You should keep a writing journal to record ideas, overheard conversations, made-up conversations, character profiles, research, images, titles, words you like the sound of, settings for scenes, etc.
- Buy a notebook small enough to carry with you all the time.
- Get in the habit of writing your ideas and your questions down. Keep a notebook next to your bed.
- Write it down. Write it down. Write it down.
- Date all your work.
- Collect images, postcards.
- Begin to pay attention to your imaginative life; feed it a little.
- Make writing a habit.

## **Attendance:**

Attending school is required by DC Law. Therefore, our goal is that our students attend school **every day** and **on time**.

- Students with 1 or 2 unexcused absences will have their parent/guardian notified of day absence.
- Students with 5 or more unexcused absences during a single advisory will receive a grade reduction. Parent/Guardian and student will also be required to have a Student Support Team meeting conducted by Attendance Counselor.

## **Grading**

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGES</b>
Assignments/	60%
Final Project (per Advisory)	20%
Class Participation / Share Journal entries ...	20%

The factors in consideration beyond the quality of your writing include:

- Attendance
- Reading the Assigned Texts and Being Prepared for Discussion
- Meeting the Assigned Deadlines for Scenes and Drafts
- Degree of Improvement
- Quality of your Critique of your Peers
- Willingness and Ability to Rewrite