

# THEA 291 Script Analysis, Fall 2024

**Dr. Dawn Larsen**

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All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players.  
-*As You Like It*, II, vii

In fact it is the simplest things that are most tricky to do well. To read, for example. To be able to read exactly what is written without omitting anything that is written and at the same time without adding anything of one's own. To be able to capture the exact context of the words one is reading. To be able to read!  
-Jean-Louis Barrault, *Reflections on the Theatre*.

The play has no other aim than to bind together the world of the living and the dead. The task of the dramatist who grasps the world in its mobile state must be to win recognition on stage for the changed conception of its nature.  
-Walter Hasenclever, *The Task of Drama*.

**Required reading:** You must purchase the Ball and Irelan book. Though most of the plays are available in the bookstore, you may use other versions.

Anon. *Dealers in White Women* provided on website.

Ball, David. *Backwards and Forwards*

Beckett, Samuel. *Happy Days*.

Glaspell, Susan. *Trifles*

Irelan, Scott R., Anne Fletcher, and Julie Felise Dubiner. *The Process of Dramaturgy. A Handbook*.  
Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2010.

Ruhl, Sarah. *The Vibrator Play* or *In the Next Room*

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*.

Shepherd, Sam. *Buried Child*.

Williams, Tennessee. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

## **Course Description:**

(Prerequisite: ENG 101). Fundamentals of play analysis for the purposes of critical analysis, performance, and production. Specific plays will be read and analyzed from all perspectives, regardless of theatrical specialization.

## **Course Objectives:**

Students will study various critical approaches to dramatic literature available to theatre artists. These skills are necessary whether the student chooses to become director, designer, critic or actor.

1. To introduce the student to the dramatic script as the primary source of information for theatrical performance.
2. To help the student develop a system of analyzing and evaluating a variety of scripts in terms of their theatrical requirements and their aesthetic qualities.
3. To explore the role of secondary research as a tool of the analysis and interpretation of scripts.

4. To introduce the student to the interdisciplinary nature of the production process, which includes research, analysis, and interpretation.
5. To introduce the student to contemporary information resources (both electronic and print), and to the principles of evaluating and using that information effectively.
6. To introduce the student to methods of critical research, and to help develop the abilities to write and speak clearly about dramatic literature, the requirements of production, and the experience of performance.

### **Important Dates**

- 11/4-5 Fall Break, no class
- 12/2 Last Day of class
- 12/3 Reading Day

### **My Teaching Philosophy**

I am committed to the idea that theatre education needs to involve the symbiosis of practice and scholarship. I believe this philosophy is one that not only champions the liberal arts ideal (i.e., a nuanced and sophisticated *appreciation* of the practice and power of theatrical expression), but also best prepares the next generation of theatre artists and scholars (i.e., those who will *create* and *critically document and consider* theatre). Theatre training entailing at every level of undergraduate and graduate study the complementary activities of artistry and intellectual development ensures future generations of theatre artists, scholars, and audiences the practical and critical skills necessary for producing, responding to and documenting, as well as witnessing compelling and meaningful theatre. I argue that one would be sufficiently prepared for the profession (be it in the academy or the commercial theatre) when s/he demonstrates a thorough understanding of the theoretical and historical foundations of drama, is capable of applying this knowledge in production, and who can, through speaking and writing, soundly communicate his/her thoughts about the theatre. In short, then, unlike a conservatory program in theatre—one focusing primarily on skills acquisition—, or a dramatic literature program—one focusing principally on the passive analysis of theatrical texts and contexts—, I champion a model of theatre education that seeks to train the whole person; one that teaches and encourages students to locate and engage in a continual dialogue between practice and theory. This notion that the study of theatre and performance needs to be a symbiotic endeavor is the foundation of my teaching philosophy. It is, in fact, a sentiment I carry with me into this or any classroom. It is also this belief that keeps me active in my field as both artist and academic.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is absolutely critical to your success in this course. This course has a collaborative nature and requires both your physical and your intellectual presence. As you are adults and responsible for your education, it is your choice to attend class. If you choose to miss class, you and only you are responsible for getting notes and instructions from your classmates. Do NOT ask me to re-lecture to you. If you choose to be late, please be considerate of me and your fellow students. Come in quietly, sit at the back of the room, and do not ask me what you have missed. I will adhere to the baseline attendance policy in the 2022-23 Francis Marion University catalog concerning Fs and Ws, which says if you are absent more than twice the number of days that the class meets, you will be dropped from the course with an F.

### **Evaluations/Grading:** (based on 1000 points)

8 analyses @ 75 pts each	600
Midterm	100
Final Project/Exam	250
Participation	50
<b>Total</b>	<u>1000</u>

**No W's will be given for any reason after the student withdrawal date.**

## Policies

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**Reading:** You are adults. I do not believe in reading the texts to you. You will be responsible for your own reading (see tentative schedule). **NO E BOOKS OF ANY KIND. YOU MUST BRING A PAPER SCRIPT WITH YOU. You MUST bring the scripts to class with you and have read them by the assigned date.** Download and bring a paper copy of the analysis found on the website with you to class. If you do not have the analysis sheet or script, you are not prepared, I will ask you to leave and you will be counted absent.

**Notes:** You must write notes for this class with paper and pencil. NO SCREENS!!! I mean this! You can use the assignment sheets to write notes on as well.

**Assignments:** You will be assigned 8 analyses to complete for 8 different plays. Length varies on each type of analysis and instructions for each will be provided. You will generally be given a week to complete each assignment. On some days, we will not meet in class. Instead, I will be available in my office to help you with the analyses. Again, do NOT ask me to re-lecture to you about a topic if you have chosen to miss class. See TO SUBMIT PAPERS section below.

**Writing:** You are expected to know how to write. See the prerequisite. I will provide you with detailed instructions about what content I would like included in each analysis. It is your responsibility to make sure papers are in the proper style. All papers for this class will need to be in latest edition MLA style. For help with style and general writing concerns, please contact the writing center at 661-1528, FH 114C.

Link to the website (<https://www.fmarion.edu/writingcenter/>)

scheduler: <https://fmarion.mywconline.com/index.php> and to our helpful videos on

- 1) How to create a WCOonline account: <https://youtu.be/R7Cd7nE79Cw>
- 2) How to make and cancel appointments: <https://youtu.be/pwy1mPKchT8>
- 3) How to navigate our online tutorial space: [https://youtu.be/slb\\_VYgLjRU](https://youtu.be/slb_VYgLjRU)

### TO SUBMIT PAPERS

We will be using DropBox to **submit papers on the day they are due by 11:20am.** You will receive an invitation at your FMU email address on file. There will be instructions in the invitation. **ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE PDFs. Title the assignment LastName.Assignment (ex.Larsen.Structural.pdf).** You will receive the marked versions with comments by DropBox. Grades will be found on the last page of your graded papers. Only you have permission to see your folder.

**Exams:** There will be a midterm given in this course. There may be an occasional unannounced quiz on the readings. Hint: Stay current.

### Correspondence

**Email** - The **best way** to correspond with me one-on-one is through email. If you choose to email me, in order for you to receive a response from me within 48 hours M-F, you **must:** email me from your FMU Gmail account **only** (required for all FMU students); in the subject line put: THEA 291 Last Name.FirstName (THEA291 Larsen.Dawn) within the email, address me as Dr. Larsen; sign your full name; the email should use grammatically correct English. If these rules are not followed, I will not respond to your email.

### My Webpage

**Check my website EVERY DAY.** I will use the website and your THEA 291 page to communicate with you as a class.

### **Phone Messages**

You may leave a phone message, but if I can't understand you, your telephone number, your name, and/or your message, I will not return your call.

### **Appointments**

You may make an appointment to see me face-to-face. Office hours are posted in a link on my website. To make an appointment, please send an e-mail message in the format outlined above.

You must receive an email message from me confirming the appointment. If you don't, it means I didn't get your message. Keep your appointment time.

### **Late Work and Extra Credit**

I believe college should prepare you for the world and part of the world is learning to be responsible. For that reason, I take NO late work (except for hospitalization of you or an immediate family member). I take ANY early work. To balance this policy, I provide ample opportunity for extra credit throughout the course. Therefore, I suggest that you take every opportunity to earn extra credit in case of assignments missed. You may complete one project of 50 points. You may read another script and write an analysis of your choice about it. All extra credit will be due **by 11/11/24 5pm** - no exceptions.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated per the student handbook and the FMU Honor Code. For the first offense, the assignment will receive a 0; second offense, you will fail the course. For all instances of plagiarism and cheating, the Fine Arts Dept Chair and the Associate Provost will be notified. This is serious business. Make sure you know what plagiarism and cheating are.

### **Midterm Deficiencies**

At Midterm, grades will be averaged. Any student with a D average or lower will receive a Midterm Deficiency via email and/or letter. Make sure the email you list with FMU is correct.

### **Electronic Devices**

All electronic devices (most especially cell phones) must be turned OFF during this class. Vibrate mode is a distraction. You may NOT use a computer or tablet to take notes unless you are officially registered with the office of disability services. Then you must show me proof that is one of your accommodations before you open your computer in the classroom. There are too many recent studies that show that writing paper notes allow for better retention. Violation of this policy will result in you being counted absent.

### **Behavior**

Though you are adults, it is necessary in some cases, to have strict behavior guidelines. Please see the "Groundrules for Discussion" link on my website for more information. **Please read the following carefully:** If you should choose to engage in behavior that is disruptive or offensive to others; talking, reading, doing other classwork, daydreaming; you will receive one warning from me. For your second offense, you will be asked to leave class for that day and be counted absent. For your third offense you will be asked to leave class for that day and directed to see the Dean of Students before you are allowed to return to class. Any missed time will be counted toward absences. After 3 warnings, you will be withdrawn from the class with an F. This class may be videotaped for disciplinary purposes. All attendance rules apply.

**THEA291**    **VERY Tentative Schedule**    **Check website for changes**

Week	Topic	Readings
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1 8/20	Intro and Procedures Structural Analysis	<i>Hamlet</i>
2 8/27	Hamlet/Ball Analysis Peer Review <b>Structural/ <i>Hamlet</i> analysis due 8/27 – rewrite 9/3</b>	<i>Hamlet</i> Ball 1-67
3 9/3	Dynamic Analysis - T <i>Buried Child</i> - Th <b>Ball analysis due 9/5</b>	Ball 60-67 <i>Buried Child</i>
4 9/10	Dynamic Practice – Bring <i>Hamlet</i> Write - Th <b>Peer Review Due 9/10</b>	<i>Hamlet</i>
5 9/17	Functional Analysis <i>Happy Days</i> <b>Dynamic Analysis/ <i>Buried Child</i> due 9/19</b>	<i>Happy Days</i>
6 9/24	Imagistic Analysis <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i>	Ball 68-75 <i>Cat</i>
7 10/1	<b>Functional Analysis/ <i>Happy Days</i> due 10/1</b> Midterm Review - T Thematic Analysis - Th	Ball 76-78
8 10/8	<b>Midterm Exam – T</b> <i>Trifles</i> <b>Imagistic/ <i>Cat</i> Due 10/10</b>	<i>Trifles</i>
9 10/15	Rhetorical Analysis <i>Dealers in White Women</i> <b>Thematic analysis/ <i>Trifles</i> due 10/15</b>	<i>Dealers in White Women</i>
10 10/22	<b>No Class this week – READ &amp; WRITE!</b>	
11 10/29	Affective Analysis – T <i>The Vibrator Play</i> - Th <b>Rhetorical Analysis/ <i>Dealers in White Women</i> due 10/29</b>	<i>The Vibrator Play</i>
12 11/7	<b>Fall Break – No class Tuesday</b> Dramaturgy <b>Affective Analysis/ <i>The Vibrator Play</i> Due 11/7</b>	<i>Buried Child</i>
13 11/12	Dramaturgy Cont. <b>Historical Context DUE 11/12</b> <b>Glossary DUE 11/14</b>	
14 11/19	Appointments all week <b>Bio DUE 11/19</b> <b>Reviews Due 11/21</b>	
15 11/26	<b>Section 1 due 11/26</b> <b>Thanksgiving Break – No class Thursday</b>	
	<b>ENTIRE corrected Dramaturgy binder DUE on Dropbox by noon 12/2</b>	

Items in **BOLD** – assignments due. Items in PLAIN text – lectures and chapters to be read. Items in ITALICS – plays to be read by Tuesday